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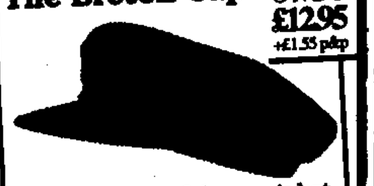

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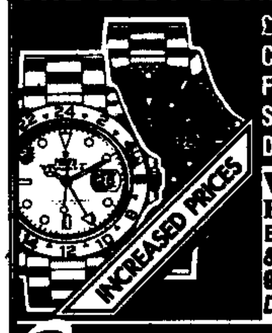

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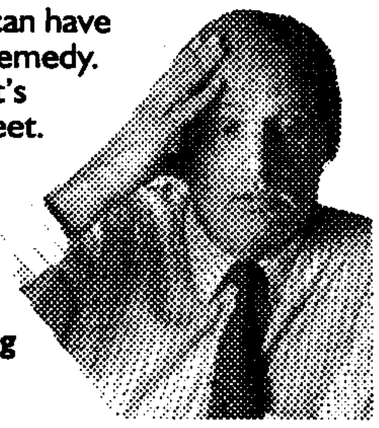

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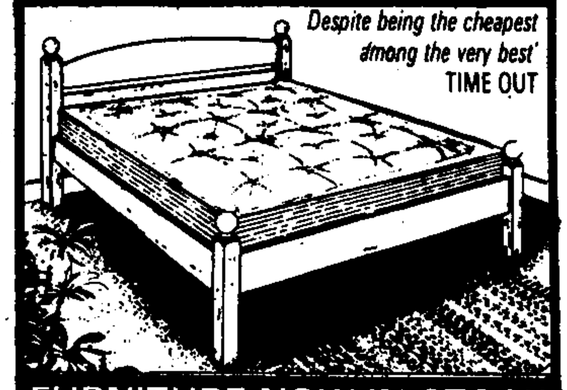

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NOW that post office privatisation is dead, who will pay for the tremendous amount of bumf circulated by the Post Office management making the case for privatisation in the most biased and specious terms?

Post offices everywhere have been covered with posters and leaflets authorised by Bill Cockburn, the chief executive, and local Post Office mandarins have responded. Typical of the nonsense circulated is the document *The Need for Change* sent to postal workers throughout the South East by the director and general manager, Pat Nield. Since about 90 per cent of postal workers and about 80 per cent of the British people were heartily opposed to privatisation, how can this extravagance be justified — and why shouldn't the directors and executives (the only ones who believed what they were distributing) pay out of their own pockets?

ONE unexpected loser following the collapse of plans to privatise the Post Office is champagne socialist Geoffrey Robinson, Labour MP for Coventry North-West.

Robinson is a director of TransTec, a Warwickshire engineering company which had a provisional order for new letter-sorting machinery from the Royal Mail. The Tories' failure to carry privatisation through and liberate the organisation's spending power means that the order has been shelved and TransTec's forecasted profits for the second half of 1994 have been reduced from £3 million to £1.5 million.

MORE about Ian Greer, the ubiquitous lobbyist. During the campaign to save Bart's hospital from the Bottomley axe, Greer offered his services to the campaigners

He and his cronies were given full access to the hospital and its patient communications, strategies and plans. After consultation with his political contacts, Greer suddenly withdrew, citing a possible conflict of interest with his work on behalf of the Royal Brompton Hospital.

Shorn of Greer's brilliant lobbying, Bart's went down. But the Royal Brompton was reprieved.

MEANWHILE the man Greer has most cause to thank in all British business, Andy Allen, chief executive of Carlton Television, writes a lame letter to the *Independent* to defend himself from the charge that Carlton changed a script at the behest of former Tory Cabinet Minister David Mellor.

"As to Carlton becoming part of a supposed 'dependency culture' between politicians and broadcasters" he writes "all I can say is than no politician should count upon it." Brave words. But there are lots of politicians who are thanking their lucky stars that Andy Allen pulled Central Television's *Cook Report* on Ian Greer Associates just before it exposed leading ministers. The same lucky chaps are hoping Allen will stand firm against the dangerous subversives on Central TV (which is now owned by Carlton) who plan to go ahead and show the programme after all.

IT'S amazing how the recent row over MPs' sleaze has jogged Members' memories. The office of the Register has been besieged with MPs who have suddenly recalled this or that trip abroad.

David Sumberg, the legalistic Tory MP for Bury South, has remembered something very odd. Just before the last election the sum of £7,500 mysteriously and anonymously arrived at his constituency headquarters. It was of course gratefully received and usefully spent, and Sumberg scraped back to the Commons by 788 votes. But who gave it, how was it spent (after all, the maximum for election expenses is only £6,500) and why does Mr Sumberg think it worth declaring now, and not in the last two registers, both of which were published since the 1992 election?

SOME MPs, on the other hand, are not in the least disturbed by the recent kerfuffle and continue to represent their business interests in their own sweet way.

Nothing, for instance, was going to interfere with the annual do thrown by Alan Haselhurst, the dapper MP for Saffron Walden, for Johnson Matthey, especially as the firm are involved in what promises to be for its shareholders a most lucrative take-over bid. Last year, Johnson Matthey had to make do with a standard cocktail party, but this year, on 28 November, Haselhurst will host a full scale lunch in the Churchill room.

(Haselhurst is a very busy man. Somehow he manages a consultancy with the chemical firm Albright & Wilson, and a consultancy with Barrington Jay & Co., who paid for a freebie to the United States last year, and who also act for the top British arms companies British Aerospace, Racal and Rolls Royce. Can that be all? Not at all. Mr Haselhurst is also a consultant to National Power.

AS the Tories sink under a sea of sleazy allegations, at least one of their MPs has been able to laugh at the whole business.

Jerry Hayes, parliamentary aide to environment minister Robert Atkins and the MP for Harlow, has an entertaining day job as a stand-up comic.

Appearing after a group of "exotic dancers" in the Butlin's holiday camp in Ayr, Hayes joked: "I'm a Tory MP, and I'm here to set a high moral tone..."

- *Fiction Masterclass: Learn The Aitken Way* . 8
- *Hackwatch: David Mellor* 11
- *Hallo! gets sleazy* 7
- *Edwina Currie: Books & Bookwomen* . . . 25
- *Slicker on Walker* 28

100 YEARS AGO

FOLLOWING the recent stories about Mohammed Fayed's application for British citizenship, and his attempts to "buy" politicians, readers may be interested to see the following:

"One government business gambit, perhaps one of the most spectacular, involved a 25-year-old Egyptian-born businessman, Mohammed Fayed, who arrived [in Haiti] in June 1964. Fayed called himself a sheik and distributed a calling card that associated him with a Kuwait oil company. Haitians described him as a man of considerable charm, and his investment proposals won major government concessions.

"Fayed received exclusive contracts which gave him control of the oil industry, shipping, and the port... Among his other accomplishments he became a Haitian citizen in a matter of months although normally a ten-year residency is required.

"He ran into opposition from the West India Trans-Atlantic Conference and the United States-Gulf-Haitian conference of shippers, who protested to [Papa Doc] Duvalier. At a meeting of the conference Fayed did not show up and Duvalier admitted that there was trouble. Duvalier said he was searching world capitals for Fayed and acknowledged that a large sum of money had left Haiti with him. Fayed's bank accounts were frozen too late..."

— From *Papa Doc and The Tonton Macoutes* by Bernard Diederich and Al Burt (Bodley Head, 1970).

NEW MELLOR SHOCK

PRIVATE EYE's own Christmas Cards — £6 a set, or FREE to new subscribers. See back cover for details. HURRY!

Street Of Shame

HAVING been given a knighthood by Thatcher for all the stories he kept out of the *Daily Express*, Sir Nicholas Lloyd has excelled himself of late. The *Express* had the Mellor-Lady C "item" story as long ago as last April — when Lloyd pulled it out of the paper.

For months the *Express* had an exclusive with the Parker-Bowles ex-butler, giving an eye witness account of Charles rogering Camilla up against a tree at the Parker-Bowles establishment... but only finally ran it after the Dimbleby-Charles TV confessions.

Sir Nick's finest effort, however, was having the Diana anonymous phone-calls story first — and ignoring it.

Time he was sent to the House of Lords where, as Lord Bollard, he could sleep undisturbed.

THE tedious feud between former *Observer* editor Donald "Pixie" Trelford and Tom Bower, unauthorised biographer of Tiny Rowland, is in danger of becoming rather entertaining after all.

In a full-page eulogy to his former boss Rowland in the *Evening Standard* two weeks ago, Trelford attacked Bower's book as "crude". The article was headed: "Don't write off Tiny, the giant of mischief."

But Bower is quite capable of making mischief too. For he has acquired a most embarrassing set of documents about the Pixie's relationship with Mohammed Fayed.

For years, Trelford allowed Rowland to use the *Observer* as a propaganda sheet in his long feud with Fayed. But it is often forgotten that until 1984 Tiny and Mohammed were the best of chums, and indeed business colleagues. It now turns out that, during that brief calm before the storm, Trelford was more than happy to avail himself of the Egyptian's legendary generosity.

Trelford and his wife, Kate, spent two weekends at the Ritz Hotel in Paris, in December 1983 and March 1984. (On the second visit, accompanied by their young daughter, they occupied no fewer than two large suites.) In a letter to Fayed on 10 March 1984, the Pixie thanked his host "for your munificent hospitality at the Ritz". In return, Trelford offered to plug the hotel in the *Observer* — both by writing an article and also by offering a free advert in the paper's colour supplement. Such an advertisement, he explained sycophantically, "would add lustre to the Magazine and help us to attract other 'grand cru' advertisers."

More embarrassingly still, given Trelford's later attacks on Fayed as a dodgy businessman, Bower's documents reveal that the Pixie himself is no model of financial rectitude. During his stay at the Ritz, he and his wife managed to spend the impressive sum of 100,000 French francs — about £10,000 — on clothes, jewellery and suchlike in the nearby shopping arcade. The hotel gave Trelford Ff100,000 in cash to cover his bills, on the understanding that he would repay it. Ten years later, in spite of repeated requests, Trelford has still not coughed up.

MEANWHILE, Bower himself came under fire from another quarter last Sunday, during David Frost's arslikhan interview with Betty Maxwell on his breakfast TV show.

Frost's deferential attitude to Betty is understandable — he is an old friend of the Maxwell family — but his willingness to let her defame Bower is rather more surprising, and may prove expensive. Six years ago Frost invited Cap'n Bob on to TV-am and encouraged him to denounce Bower as a crook. Bower promptly sued for libel, and collected £25,000 in damages.

THE NEW model Labour Party's Mary Poppins, Harriet Harman, has been writing a series of stirring articles in the *Daily Mirror* about getting women back to work.

So it's grand to see that the new model *Daily Mirror* is putting this into practice by "shedding" all its senior women features writers. The past fortnight has seen Noreen Taylor and Georgina Walsh driven from the paper, Christine Garbutt handed her marching orders, and the award-winning health correspondent Jill Palmer given warning letters.

FANCY a flutter? Then ignore the tips of Britain's top sports writers who took a pasting from George Foreman in the world heavyweight championship. Those Fleet Street experts in full...

30 October: John Dillon, *The People*. "George Foreman rumbles into view next weekend for a freakshow which makes Chris Eubank look like a busker."

1 November: Paul Hayward, *Daily Telegraph*. "Foreman is volunteering to be beaten up for large sums of money."

4 November: Neil Allen, *Evening Standard*. "Foreman should not be allowed to fight for the title on humanitarian grounds."

5 November: Colin Hart, *The Sun*. "Foreman could end up badly hurt with his cherubic features turned into a grotesque and bloody mess. Fat's yer lot, Foreman!"

5 November: Ian Gibb, *Daily Mirror*. "Moorer will... punch Foreman to a shattered standstill by the eighth."

5 November: Ken Jones, *The Independent*. "Youth over ageing is the way to bet. It is impossible to make a case for Foreman."

5 November: James Lawton, *Daily Express*. "Michael Moorer will win tonight as surely as the hosts will make a thundering profit. Foreman will lose. The only question is how badly he will be hurt."

5 November: Er, Foreman knocks out Moorer in the tenth round and becomes world heavyweight champion.

NOT ALL THE PHILISTINES WERE DESPONDENT WHEN DAVID SLEW GOLIATH

EARLIER this year we drew attention to the pitiable ordeal of *Daily Mirror* hack Ted Macauley. Although he has been the paper's motor-racing correspondent for 30 years, sports editor David Balmforth seems curiously reluctant to let him attend Grand Prix races. Thus, when a driver was killed in the San Marino Grand Prix six months ago, Macauley's on-the-spot report described how "I saw the tragedy" — without mentioning that he had watched it on a TV set in Oldham.

Last weekend, the eyes of all Formula One fans were on Adelaide. Yet again, however, Balmforth decided that it wasn't worth sending Macauley to cover Damon Hill's attempt to win the drivers' championship.

On Sunday, belatedly, the *Mirror* discovered that the race had been rather eventful, with Hill being forced off the track by Michael Schumacher. The sports desk desperately tried to find a freelance in Adelaide to write it up — only to find that, because of the time difference, they had all gone to bed. So Macauley was asked to do his usual trick of watching the race on British television and then reporting it. For a change, the *Mirror* did not actually claim that he had been at the racetrack — unlike its Scottish sister paper the *Daily Record*, which ran a despatch on Monday "From Ted McAaulay [*sic*] in Adelaide".

Even so, the *Mirror*'s coverage hardly tallies with the slogan blazoned across the top of its front page every morning — "Honesty, Quality, Excellence". For, in addition to Macauley's article, Monday's *Mirror* carried several pieces "From Matt Hughes in Adelaide". In fact, these were written by hacks in the London office. "Matt Hughes" does not exist.

Private I-I-I!

THIS week's round-up of the nation's most egocentric columnists (based on the number of incidences of the word "I" in a single piece).

1	Esther Rantzen (Daily Express 7/11)	**45**
2	Matthew Parris (Times 7/11)	**35**
3=	Zoë Heller (Independent on Sunday 6/11)	**31**
3=	Esther Rantzen (Daily Express 14/11)	**31**
5	Michael Winner (Sunday Times 6/11)	**28**
6=	William Donaldson (Independent 5/11)	**27**
6=	Taki (Sunday Times 13/11)	**27**
6=	Sue Arnold (Observer 6/11)	**27**
9	Petronella Wyatt's Mandrake (Sunday Telegraph 6/11)	**26**
10=	John Junor (Mail on Sunday 6/11)	**25**

Bubblin' under: Richard Littlejohn, Ruth Dudley Edwards, Mariella Frostrup

(Thanks to B. Douglas)

GREAT CONMEN: No. 94

THE *Daily Mail*'s fount of financial knowledge, Money Mail, only gives out the soundest business advice. Its advertisers are financially impeccable too.

One recent advert was for a book called *The Lazy Man's Way to Riches* by Alan Blinkhorn. This obviously unblemished character told *Daily Mail* readers to send just £15 and his book would show them how to make buckets of cash.

But wait, could this financial adviser be the same Alan Blinkhorn whose own way to riches included "cheating the weakest members of the community", according to Mr Justice Vinelott in 1989. Surely not. This couldn't be the same man who told people to send a £20 fee and he would show them how to make £75. Hapless customers who paid up got 25p for each new recruit they managed to make to Blinkhorn's £20 scam.

Nor could it possibly be the gentleman who acted as "consultant" to Central Records Research, the company which last year charged thousands of people £15 for details of an unclaimed estate in their family name. No windfall from a long lost relative was forthcoming of course, instead customers received notice of an unrelated person who shared their surname who had indeed died intestate.

THE suggestion in *Eye* 856 that readers should write to protest about the sacking in Spain of British Council teacher Tony McGinty for putting up a copy of the *Eye* on the notice board seems to have had some success.

So awful were the replies to protesters of director general John Hanson that someone in high places in the Council has had second thoughts. Tony McGinty has now been reinstated, provided he grovels with an apology and accepts three months' suspension without pay.

HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! I AM deeply touched when the movingly sincere David Mellor tells a waiting world that: "All this publicity is a tragedy for my family." A tear springs to my eye when the roly-poly aficionado of pedal extremities announces to television cameras that: "I have great affection for my children." And I can contain my admiration for this pillar of British family life no longer when he reassures us all: "I am trying to protect my children from disruption. One of my sons is just ten years old, after all."

Presumably, this touchingly dedicated father is entirely unrelated to the other David Mellor, the gap-toothed adulterer who attended a Chelsea v. Norwich match on 12 September 1992 and waved and joked with thousands of fans drunkenly singing terrace songs about his amorous activities in a Chelsea strip.

For by the side of that David Mellor was a tiny boy, confused and embarrassed. And at that time, the little boy was just eight years old. After all.

HALLO! *FAMILY newspapers have tastefully drawn a veil over the contents of obsessive phone calls from David Mellor, when Minister for Fun, to PLO beauty Mona Bowens. But the Marquesa can fearlessly reveal that those calls — often before going into or leaving Cabinet meetings — are of the most undescribable filth and concern only one subject: Mellor.*

Calling up to five times an hour, the love-lorn minister would whisper such sweet nothings as: "Did you see me on the Frost show? What did you think of my tie, me, my career..."

Even on that famous free holiday in Spain, when forced to accompany his unfortunate family on a day's outing, Mellor constantly phoned Mona's villa. The Palestinian belle and another guest, dizzy socialite Liz Brewer, pretended they'd just met a fabulously rich and handsome Arab. This girlish prank sent Mellor demented with jealousy.

And he never even got his leg over!

HALLO! POOR Mona Bauwens seems destined to be unlucky in love. Forced by the ghastly tabloids to reveal through friends that David Mellor had proposed marriage to her and used to pester her with up to seven calls a day, she now tells the Marquesa of a new problem of the heart.

Earlier this year she had a brief *tendresse* with the Hon. Nicholas Monson, public relations supremo and heir to the vast Monson estate in Lincolnshire. The relationship progressed so well that she offered to marry the boy. He declined, on the grounds that he was already married. Mona then offered to pay off Mrs Monson, but Nicholas could not be budged.

Mona is understandably puzzled and hurt. How, she asks, can Monson prefer an impoverished white Kenyan to a wealthy glamorous Arab such as herself? The ways of love are indeed mysterious.

HALLO! THE newly-wed Ms Antonia de Sancha tells the celebrated newspaper *Today* that she suspected David Mellor of sleeping with another woman during their affair two years ago. She explains, in tones of high moral outrage, that she would sometimes return to the flat they shared to find the sheets "rumpled".

Antonia certainly knows all about two-timing. For, while she was seeing the former Minister of Fun, she also found time to entertain Shakespearean actor Alan Armstrong at her seedy flat in Chiswick.

HALLO! *POVERTY-stricken Betty Maxwell — reduced to only one maid! — has been bravely chronicling how dear old Capt'n Bob used to shag secretaries. But Betty's charming memoir does not do justice to the Fat Man's charismatic seduction technique. The Marquesa passes on this tip from a dear friend who experienced the Maxwell method.*

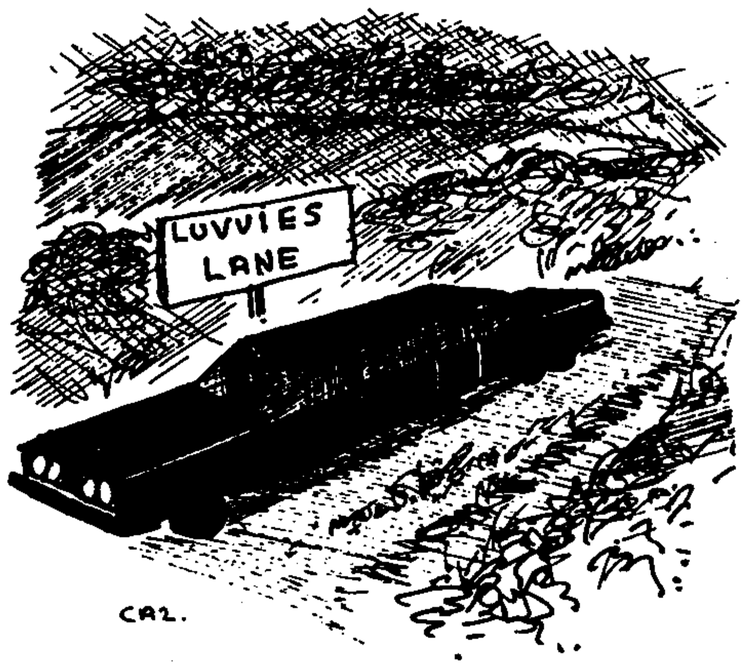
A senior woman publisher, attending the Frankfurt Book Fair, exited from the ladies' loo to be confronted by a grotesquely obese millionaire, who tried to press himself against her, exhibiting his little chipolata... with a deep-throated boom of: "Ich bin ein Frankfurter."

HALLO! THE Marquesa had to dive for cover when Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach unleashed the full force of his military temper at a charity meeting recently.

Still, the target of his wrath had it coming: a lippy bunch of whingeing elderly blind war veterans, who were selfishly trying to oppose the closure of their Brighton charity home.

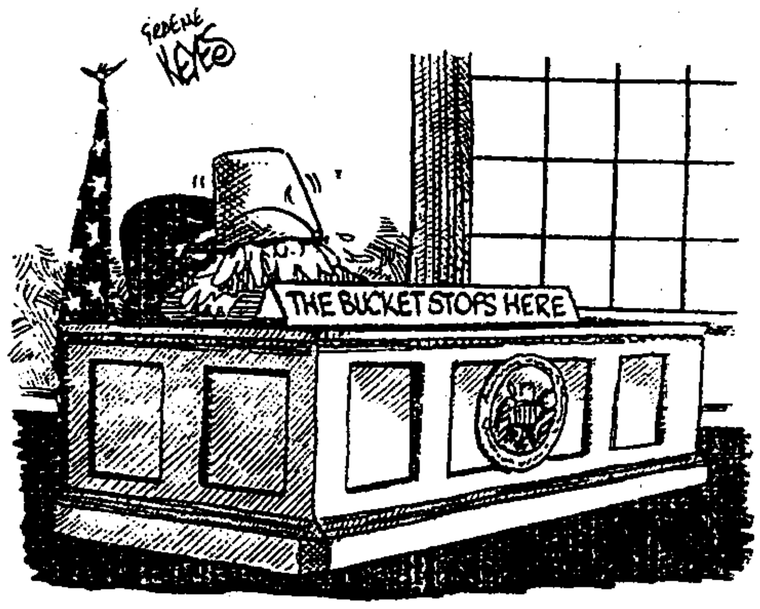
Sir Henry called the ex-servicemen and women disloyal and subversive for not accepting the closure. The pensioners, many in their eighties and disabled, didn't look like prospective members of Class War, but Sir Henry, who is supposedly the chairman of their charity, St Dunstan's, still gave them a frightful dressing down.

"If you are so dissatisfied with the services St Dunstan's provides, then it is open to you to leave," he fumed. The admiral then turned on his heel and left the meeting to unfair catcalls of "despot".



HALLO! *HOW poignant to hear Prince Philip, who recently accepted a rare Israeli honour on behalf of his late mother, talk of his shock on learning about Nazism at school.*

Philip, as usual, was being modest! He need only have asked sister Sophie, who also attended the ceremony: her first husband, Prince Christophe of Hesse, was one of Goering's top officials as head of Forschungsamt, the Nazis' GCHQ-equivalent. Christopher's brother, Prince Philip of Hesse, also an intimate of Goering's, was also a high-ranking SS man. And Prince Philip himself attended the funeral of another brother in-in-law, the Grand Duke of Hesse. The Times of 24 November, 1937, recorded: "There were present detachments of the Armed Forces and the National-Socialist Party... among the mourners Prince Andrew and Princess Andrew of Greece and their son Prince Philip..."



HALLO! THE PRINCE of Wales is going to have to take a firm line with his nominal subjects. When Charles attended the Springbok rugby thrashing of Llanelli a fortnight ago, a no doubt small but vocal minority in the crowd were heard to sing "Where's Diana gone?" to the tune of 'Chirpy-Chirpy-Cheep-Cheep'. To compound this gross disloyalty, the following day when *Wales On Sunday* asked: "Do we need a Prince of Wales?", 80 per cent of their readers said no.

HRH can, however, console himself with the high regard he is held in by his even more farflung vassals in the Orkneys. A loyal Orcadian has sent me a touching Royal Mail commemoration of Charles's Investiture as Prince of Wales — although it had unfortunately been post-marked 'Twat'.

HALLO! *DEAR Alan Clark — I invited him to attend Lord Gnome's prestigious luncheon salon on 9 November, but he lamented: "I'm booked until November 1995!" So I eagerly sent the gay lothario an invitation for 8 November, next year. Last Tuesday, a bewildered gent was seen to be hovering about the bar at the Coach and Horses in Greek Street, announcing proudly that he had an audience with Lord Gnome. It was gently explained to him that he'd come a day early. Actually, it was a year early. In a moment of inattention, he had obviously made a note of this glittering rendezvous in the wrong diary.*

"Who the fuck's that?" asked genial publican Norman Balon, as the old boy shuffled out into the gathering winter gloom.

HALLO! JONATHAN Aitken, smoothie arms dealer and chief secretary to the Treasury, has failed to register another interest that will prove far more damaging to his Tory chums than any Ritz foolishness. Jonathan, I discover, once indulged in a dalliance with left-wing chat show hostess Germaine Greer. I expect he will have to resign.

On the other hand, he could just deny it and then acknowledge it years later when he thinks everyone has forgotten, as he did back in April 1977 when he flatly denied that he was romantically involved with Carol Thatcher. "The story is completely untrue," he told the London *Evening News*. "My constituents must be getting as exhausted as I am by the London gossip columnists' capacity for fiction on romantic issues." Two years later, on his engagement to Lolicia Azucki, he gave a long interview to the *News of the World* in which he spoke at length about one of his previous lovers. "I certainly felt a lot for her," he admitted. "We were very much romantically attached." And who was this lucky woman? Why, Carol Thatcher.

The Marquesa

IN THE TEAROOM

THE SHORT recess before the State Opening of Parliament is usually a forward-looking, optimistic time for Tory backbenchers.

Not this year. The retreat from Post Office privatisation, John Major's resolute centrism — signalled at party conference — the problems of finding a middle-way on awkward questions such as the European budget and tax and spending cuts, and yet another David Mellor sex scandal have prompted feelings of nostalgia for the triumphant days of Margaret Thatcher.

After her first great victory in 1979, Kenneth Baker was chosen to second the Commons' fulsome reply to the Queen's Speech, known as the "Loyal Address". Traditionally, this job goes to a backbencher recently spotted as being "able" who will say something very smart, and then dutifully balance it with some self-deprecating remarks calculated to reassure the old boobies on the 1922 Committee Executive that they don't have some ghastly intellectual in their midst.

Baker, though he knew the form, was too vain to oblige. "The Conservative Party is like a bird," he trilled, "it has two wings, but its brains are in the middle." Just as the House was recovering from this daring jeu d'esprit, Baker, oozing disingenuousness from every follicle, went on to pledge that his own career would "steer a middle way between sycophancy and rebellion".

One reason for all last week's guffawing in Rodin's Restaurant (where MPs meet while the House is shut up for the recess) has been David Hunt's discomfiture at finally realising that he was stuffed at the reshuffle into becoming nothing but the patsy for each and every Government cock-up. Mr Hunt, formerly the Prime Minister's brown-noser in chief, has had a row with his boss and is now wondering whether his prospects wouldn't be brighter with Ken Clarke in charge. What's really been getting the bellies heaving, though, is a distorted echo of Kenneth Baker, 1979, told and retold by MPs who rarely even get a joke, let alone make one. "The Conservative Party is like a bird... It has two wings, but its *arse* is in the middle."

'Urquhart'

AS WELL as the sleaze wave, Westminster is currently enjoying an unprecedented spate of thefts with telephones, computers and printers all going walkies from the Commons.

The problem for SO17, the palace of Westminster division of the Metropolitan police, is that the items often go walkies out of the front door, say disgruntled officers, in the hands of MPs.

Most of the MPs refuse to wear security passes, say the officers, and when they are challenged over what they have about their person they may respond with "colourful Cockney phrases" and threats that they will have the cheeky officer assigned to other duties — ie traffic.

Privately SO17 blames the serjeant at arms, the Commons official responsible for security. The serjeant is reluctant to enforce security procedures for fear of upsetting the MPs, and also refuses to support SO17's complaints about lightfingered MPs refusing to comply with security requirements.

"If an MP walked in here with a bag marked 'Semtex', we'd probably have to lend him a hand," said a senior officer.

OPEN government is the Tories proud claim. Yet residents in well-to-do Cambridge found it impossible to squeeze info from the Department of the Environment.

They had heard the Department was considering dumping radioactive waste on their local waste tip. Naturally they were looking for reassurances. Naturally they didn't get them.

First, they were told about the public consultation period just four days before it came to an end. Then they had to drag members of the DoE to a public meeting which the politicos only agreed to when they heard TV cameras would be present.

Then there was the small matter of whether all radiation is harmful or not. Oh yes it is! cried the worried Cambridge public. Oh no it isn't! cried the men from the open government.

Their final triumph in the openness stakes was to deny that they even knew which sites were being considered for dumping. How were they supposed to know? No-one ever tells them anything.

HOUSING minister David Curry went to Blackburn recently to see how the council there was spending its City Challenge money on new housing and development in the town centre.

Sadly, when he drew up at the town hall there was no fanfare and no waiting official. When Curry announced who he was, the council workers looked bemused, not honoured, and claimed not to be expecting him.

Desperate, he brandished his letter of invitation — only to have one of the officials cautiously point out that Curry had come to Burnley town hall, not Blackburn. All the minister could say was: "Oh bugger. Get me a taxi."

It might be an easy mistake for a Yorkshire MP to make — both towns are in east Lancashire and both begin with the letter B — but the two towns don't take the matter so lightly. Their rivalry is so fierce that when Blackburn was put out of the UEFA cup by Trelleborgs, Burnley asked the Swedish town's mayor if they could twin.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM, the new Labour environment spokesman who has 11,000 voters in his constituency working for British Nuclear Fuels, is re-drafting the party's energy policy to ensure Labour enters the next election as the only one advocating an extension of nuclear power.

The first draft, supporting Labour policy of building no more nuclear power stations and phasing out existing ones, was written by Robin Cook when he held the environment portfolio. Before it could be published Cunningham was given Cook's job. But when Cunningham has rewritten it, it will go to the national policy commission which is chaired by... Robin Cook, who will try to reestablish his original thoughts. Then it will go to the party conference where, er, Cunningham will try to reestablish his views. This exercise is called Labour party politics.

'Backbiter'

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS ILLEGAL WASTE OF MONEY ON THE PERGAU DAM?
LET IT BE KNOWN THAT WE WILL APPOINT...
...A SCAPEGOAT!
COURT RULING

FICTION MASTERCLASS: Learn the Aitken Way

YOU ARE a public figure with something to hide, and someone is asking you embarrassing questions. What do you do? Confess everything? Lie? Evade the issue?

Anyone who finds themselves in this tiresome quandary should take a few tips from a proven expert in the field, Jonathan Aitken MP, the chief secretary to the Treasury. In 1981, he allowed Saudi investors to buy a stake in TV-am, of which he was a director, but neglected to mention the fact to any of his colleagues on the board. Seven years later, when he was found out, he explained that he had not recognised "the need for candour".

Candour, in Aitken's view, is such a precious commodity that it should be strictly rationed. Last October, the *Guardian* discovered that he had stayed at the Paris Ritz at the same time as three business associates, Wafic Said, Fahad Somait and Said Mohammed Ayas. When questioned about it, he replied: "I had no meeting with Mr Ayas, Dr Somait and Mr Wafic Said in Paris over the weekend of 18 September or at any other place or time. I have not seen or spoken to Dr Somait or Wafic Said for several months. The purpose of my visit was to meet my wife and daughter... I had no meetings in Paris or Geneva except for social encounters with my daughter's godparents and other old friends."

This comprehensive denial seemed to be chockfull of "candour" — but it was nothing of the sort. For the "godparent" in question, as the *Guardian* soon learned, was none other than Mohammed Ayas. When this was put to Aitken, he said: "Yes, I did see Mr Ayas."

The *Guardian* then turned to the matter of Aitken's hotel bill, which had apparently been credited to Ayas's account. "Mr Ayas did not pay my hotel bill," Aitken replied on 13 January. "The facts of the matter are that the hotel bill was paid by my wife, with money given to her by me for this purpose, some hours after I had left Paris."

No ambiguity there, surely? However, part of the hotel bill had in fact been paid by Ayas's nephew. Aitken reimbursed him with a cheque dated 21 February 1994 — more than a month after his indignant denial that anyone other than his wife might have paid the bill.

Meanwhile, on 17 February Aitken faxed the Ritz's manager, Frank Klein, to ask if he could remember Lolicia Aitken's transaction. Klein answered that the cashier recalled "a brunette lady of European aspect paid the cash sum of Ff4257 in favour of the account of Mr Ayas." Aitken then sent a copy of this letter to Sir Robin Butler — but only after removing the words "in favour of the account of Mr Ayas". Candid, or what?

Then, two weeks ago, a new allegation surfaced: that Aitken had visited Mohammed Ayas's £15 million yacht, the Katamarino, this summer. At 5.15pm on 3 November, Aitken's office issued a straight denial on his behalf: "At no stage was he on the Katamarino." An hour later, told that the ship's captain distinctly remembered seeing him, the office produced an oddly-worded embellishment to the statement: "Mr Aitken has never been on a 10-day cruise on the Katamarino or any other boat. He has never been on any boat in his life for longer than a few hours, or a day trip or a short sea crossing."

The captain stuck to his story. And, the following day, the Treasury changed its tune: "This is a purely private matter. But I believe Mr Aitken and his family had dinner on board with an old family friend one evening." The family friend was, of course, Mohammed Ayas. Thus in the space of 24 hours Aitken moved from insisting that he'd never set foot on the boat to admitting that he had. Impressive, eh? *(For Aitken's romantic denials, see Hallo!)*

NOOKS and CORNERS

WITHIN only seven years of its opening, the Clore Gallery at the Tate has been *re*opened after an expensive refurbishment. Oak floors replace oatmeal carpet; the large coved cornices have been stripped out and the walls painted in a tasteful shade variously described as "mauve-pink" and "magnolia-beige" upon which, we must hope, the paintings of J.M.W. Turner may look a little better.

The Tate Gallery claims that all these changes were approved by the genius Sir James Stirling before he died two years ago. On the other hand, the Royal Fine Art Commission announced earlier this year that it could not say what the wall colour would be and, besides, its members probably could not agree on such an artistic manner. If the commission cannot have an opinion on the most sympathetic and correct setting for the work of England's greatest painter, it is difficult to understand what this august body is for. But let that pass.

Particularly entertaining are the contortions of Stirling's groupies as they attempt to justify this radical alteration of their hero's masterpiece. Deyan Sudjic in the *Grauniad* claims that although "it is impossible that the remodelling of the Clore conforms with Stirling's original view of the building", the change, "far from diminishing the building, makes it a better piece of architecture". Which is surely to suggest that if it were completely rebuilt, it might become Stirling's greatest work.

"Rather than making a fetish out of the architect's original intentions, it is important to learn from the way in which a building actually feels in use." Quite so. And if the late, and, I must say, lamented Big Jim had bothered to listen to the Tate's curators in the first place, these changes would not have been necessary.

But Sudjic insists "the Clore can be seen as a remarkably brave piece of work from an architect fighting for his professional life". This was because most of his British buildings were collapsing and threatened with demolition. But is it really "brave" to be so arrogant as to be determined to erect a posturing and incoherent personal statement at the expense of Turner? Besides, this apologia is disingenuous as Stirling was larded with praise and honours and had lots of commissions abroad. After all, his only good building is in Stuttgart. *Ein britischer Arkitekt*!

IN FACT, doesn't it make you proud to be British to see how we export our knighted architects? British architect superstars are, after all, working all over the world.

Such is the power of vapid fashion that Sir Norman Foster was invited to foul Nimes by building next to the Maison Carée and now the poor, confused, guilt-ridden Germans have asked him rather than one of many talented German architects to remodel the burned-out Reichstag in Berlin, giving us the delicious irony of one of the world's most ruthlessly authoritarian architects, who runs his glass 'n' steel office like a prison camp, designing a symbol of democracy. Give me Albert Speer.

My picture is a cutting from a Strasbourg newspaper sent by a kind reader in exile. It shows the old "relais du poste" on the quai Bevan, a charming survival from the old Oblates convent dating from the 17th century and preserved by order of the municipality in 1990. But it is not safe, as a britischer Arkitekt is at work nearby. This is Richard Rogers, who has designed the Palace of the Rights of Man next door, a Euromonument for Eurocrats and Eurolawyers due for completion next year. On his last visit to the site, Sir Richard took exception to the poor old inn and expressed the hope it might disappear so as not to spoil the setting of his masterpiece. To judge by the comments of Hubert Ancel, Rogers's representative on earth — well, in Strasbourg, anyway — he seems to think that old and new cannot possiblyco-exist.

Naturally the whims of our bronzed and relaxed superstar must be law in the nation which gave us the Rights of Man, the guillotine and the Terror. "One has to be realistic," says Ancel. "The building has been so reworked, both inside and indeed on the exterior, that it has lost all architectural merit." Which I take to mean that it has been so restored (like the Clore Gallery?), that it has no merit. On similar grounds, no doubt Sir Richard could advocate the removal of, say, Strasbourg cathedral, if it spoiled the setting of one of his own designs. So the poor old relais du poste is likely to be removed and re-erected elsewhere in the city. The result will be the destruction of a real piece of old Strasbourg, the creation of a piece of bogus "heritage" elsewhere, and the sterilising of another corner of Europe for modern architecture and bureaucrats.

The moral of the story is that for all their posturing about urban civilisation, the continuity of history and how old and new can complement each other, our knighted high tech geniuses are simply incapable of designing in the urban grain of real cities and of working with historic buildings. Let them work abroad!

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

I look at Madonna as a barometer of culture, waging semiotic warfare, working with certain strategies to upend stable categories of sexuality and gender.

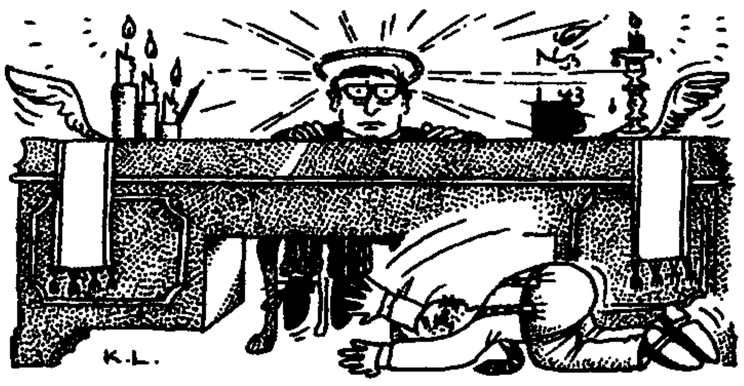
JON PARELES
Guardian

The Wild Woman Archetype
For Life, Growth and Healing
This workshop is based on women's myths and legends drawn from writers such as Bolen, Hillman, Estes and earlier wisdom sources. It is designed for women "of a certain age" facing, undergoing or emerging from the midlife rite of passage — menopause. This workshop will focus on theoretical and experiential exploration, symbolic enactments and creative other ways to facilitate and celebrate the wild, irrational and untame-able archetypes of the truly feminine in life, art and psychotherapy.

Advertisement in Guardian

If the Christian churches are to survive their present crisis then they need to find, as the early Christians did, new language and fresh thinking. Slapping down the old money — unity, salvation, hope, the Son of God, forgiveness — as if it is still legal tender, will not work. We bite the coin and find it counterfeit.

MONICA FURLONG
Independent



In half an hour I am to meet Bill Gates. This is a lifetime event, a rite of passage, an intellectual ordeal and the Microsoft people want to make sure I have time to prepare, spiritually and mentally.

BRYAN APPLEYARD
Sunday Times Magazine

The tender care for the Darjeeling First Flush (meticulously measured into an empty, re-sealable Japanese muslin teabag), the uncompromised precision, the final throwaway English idiom: this is Mitsuko Uchida. Her conversation, like her piano playing, is supple, volatile, at one moment spare and emphatic as a calligraphic brush-stroke, at another as earnestly referenced and intellectually questioning as an archetypal Central European argument. Her verbal and musical language is mesmerically eclectic and allusive; yet it has a late and difficult birth.

HILARY FINCH
Times

Richard Pinkney seldom shows his work in a gallery. He contends that such a presentation has little to do with the work itself, which is intentionally oblique. It is designed for private viewing in the studio or to externalise some discreet or idiosyncratic thought. Positive spectator response, recognition by a peer group — these are an extra, a welcome bonus, but not the primary aim of the work.

Suffolk College Staff Newsletter

Given Time
I. Counterfeit Money
Jacques Derrida
Translated by Peggy Kanuf

Is *giving* possible? Derrida looks as this question through texts by Heidegger, Mauss, Benveniste, Levi-Strauss and Baudelaire.

Advertisement Times Literary Supplement

CONTRIBUTORS: J. Kerr, J. Taylor, C. Eakin, R. Perry, R. Millen, A. Lecturer, E. Strobes.

£10 paid for entries

TV EYE

The Trial of Lord Lucan (ITV)

ALTHOUGH theme weeks are common on BBC2, it's rare to have a theme week stretching across every channel. Recently, though, BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Radio 4 have all featured programmes about Lord Lucan.

The reason is that it is 20 years since "Lucky" disappeared on the night his children's nanny was murdered and his wife was attacked at his Belgravia home. But, though a reason, this is not an *explanation* for such blanket coverage. The Lucan story was not, objectively, big enough to deserve this kind of coverage two decades later.

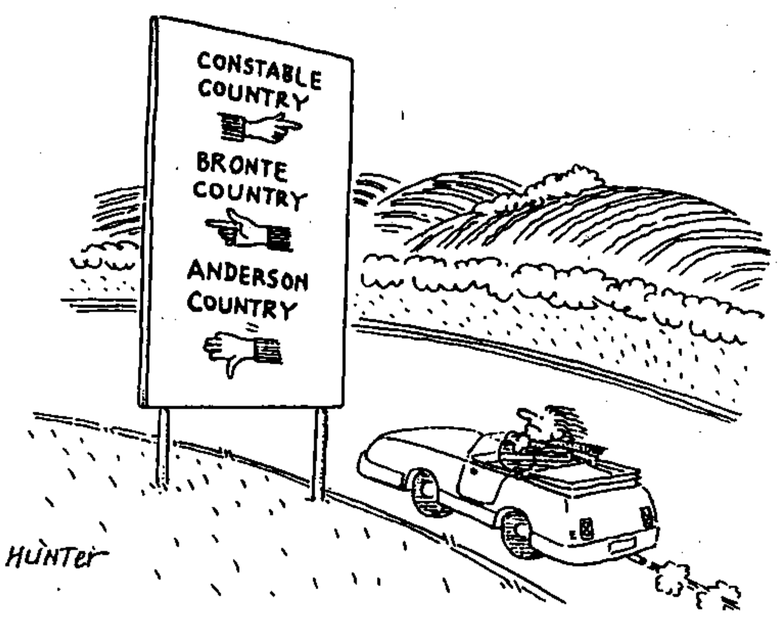
The explanation is that English documentary-makers and current affairs producers have long suffered from a condition known as conspiracy-envy. Their American cousins get at least one programme a year — with extra specials at five-year intervals — on who shot President Kennedy. It is the perfect television documentary subject: huge public interest, thousands of contending conjectures, all the main participants dead and unable to cause trouble, and the constitutional first amendment to see off their relatives if they cause trouble. Every British documentary maker remembers exactly where they were when they saw their first JFK conspiracy programme.

One way round the problem is for our boys simply to make programmes about that story; but, broadcasters being supposed to concentrate on their own country, they can't get away with too many of those. So the search has gone on for a homegrown open-ended story with possibilities for reconstruction and speculation.

It seemed to have arrived with the death, or "death", of Robert Maxwell, and every doc and drama-doc team in town got straight on the case. This really seemed to be the British equivalent of JFK: mystery, money, public fascination. But then the British legal system, constant scourge of British film-makers, got in the way. The long-delayed and, if they ever happen, lengthy, trials of Maxwell's sons have frightened off TV companies from the case.

In the light of this disappointment, the boys noticed that the Lucan 20th anniversary was coming up. The Lucan case is, in fact, probably the only British story which journalists can handle with virtual impunity: lawyers are just about convinced by now that the (alleged) bad lord is unlikely to come back and sue for libel.

So, for the 20th anniversary, every possible angle has been covered. Former Det Chief Supt Roy Ransom outlined for Channel 4 his theory that Lucan is still alive. Ludovic Kennedy, for BBC1, presented, with dramatic reconstructions, the case for the lord's suicide. And last week's **The Trial of Lord Lucan**, for ITV, imagined that Lucky had been apprehended on the night of the murder and put on trial at the Old Bailey.



Actors played all the parts except that of the jury, who were "ordinary people", asked to produce a verdict.

Rarely has a drama-documentary had such authenticity problems. The producers had obviously decided the real Lucan did not look dishy enough for the lead in a peak-time drama, and so Julian Wadham, twice as handsome as the missing peer, had been cast, but was so bad a match that he needed an identifying placard round his neck.

The standard problem in drama-documentary — that the viewer doesn't know which bits really happened — was here worse than ever, given that half of the stuff — the trial — definitely hadn't happened. But was the police investigation a reconstruction of the real one or a fictionalised one, given that, in the drama, there was the crucial difference that the suspect was in custody? Anachronisms were everywhere: when young Lady Frances gave evidence, barristers and judges removed their wigs to look more friendly, but this was a 90s judicial reform, and the trial was supposed to be taking place in 1975.

At the end, the "jury of real people" gave their verdict. There was a corny sub-*Crown Court* shot of Lucan looming up into the empty frame as he rose from his seat to hear the foreman speak. The jury had been unable to reach a verdict on either charge. This was a spectacular moment of television: 90 minutes and several hundred thousand pounds had just been spent in proving to the viewer that nobody really knew whether Lord Lucan was guilty or not, when the starting premise of the programme had been that nobody really knew whether Lord Lucan was guilty or not.

"You will be sent for retrial at a date to be fixed," thundered the fictional judge at the Lucan non-lookalike. Mmmm. Well, how about 1999, and 2004, the 25th and 30th anniversary of the Lucan disappearance? Britain's conspiracy-theorist- wannabe- documentary-directors will just have to hope that old Lucky doesn't turn himself in before then. There are still so many possible theories to cover — including the tantalising possibility that the murderous earl has submerged himself as the pseudonymous television reviewer of a satirical magazine.

'Square Eyes'

"It wasn't so much your policies, Jesus. You got the presentation all wrong!"

MEDIA NEWS

THOUGH there were loud sighs of relief when Lord Chalfont announced his impending retirement as chairman of the Radio Authority, he leaves a reminder of his idiosyncratic reign.

The authority was split on whether to award Richard Branson's Virgin station an FM licence for London as it already has a national AM licence. Chalfont narrowly won the day, giving Branson the go-ahead to "simulcast" — to broadcast the same pisspoor rock on two supposedly different licences, one on AM and one on FM — even though this is against normal rules. Still, what the lord giveth, no one else can take away.

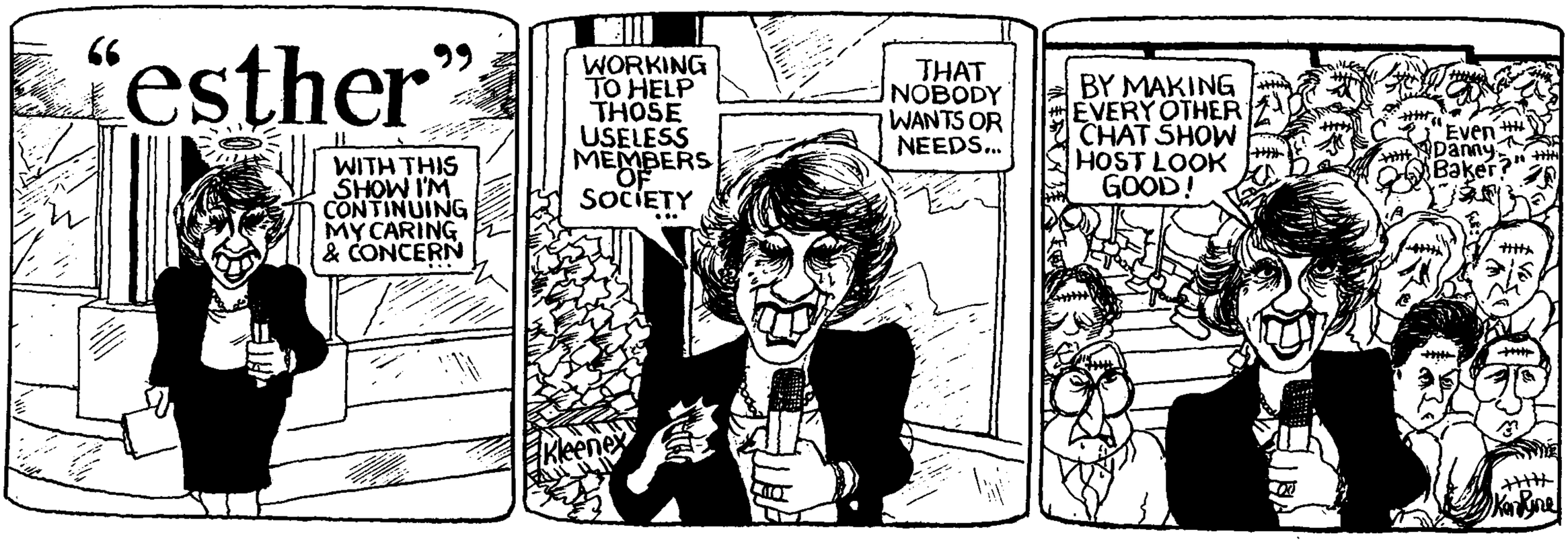
What the authority now needs is a safe pair of hands. Enter new chairman Sir Peter Gibbings, who takes over on 1 January. This is the same Sir Peter Gibbings who was chairman of Anglia Television at the time Lord Archer wasn't even remotely involved in insider trading, and the same Sir Peter who stepped down after the MAI takeover.

BIRTSPEAK

"PERFORMANCE indicators" are the latest buzz words to hit the decks at sinking Radio One, where staff have greeted this latest bit of Birtspeak with huge enthusiasm. Not.

Instead of just writing the record title and composer on to programme broadcaster's sheets, studio staff must now perform a new feat of form filling to ensure "fair representation on air". It involves noting whether the performers are male or female; what country they come from; what colour they are; and, if they are British, whether they are from the north or south, England or Wales, etc.

This is a commendable gesture to geographical correctness — but the broadcasters don't quite see it that way and have even been heard muttering such loyal Birtian phrases as "complete bloody waste of time".


"esther"
WITH THIS SHOW I'M CONTINUING MY CARING & CONCERN...
WORKING TO HELP THOSE USELESS MEMBERS OF SOCIETY...
THAT NOBODY WANTS OR NEEDS...
Kleenex
BY MAKING EVERY OTHER CHAT SHOW HOST LOOK GOOD!
"Even Danny Baker?"
KenPyne

ALTHOUGH Rupert Murdoch claims that BSkyB is going from strength to strength, morale among the 1,500 staff at Sky's Subscriber Management Centre (SMC) in Livingston, Scotland, is far from high.

There is, however, one satellite TV fan who can expect VIP treatment. BSkyB boss Sam Chisholm recently phoned the SMC to ask for technical help to tune in Rupert Murdoch's satellite dish. The operator who took the call assumed it was a practical joke and told him to take a walk. Alas! It was indeed the fearsome Chisholm — and all staff at the Centre have now been told that if anyone phones and claims to be Sam Chisholm he is to be believed unquestioningly and given the highest possible level of service. Failure to comply is a sackable offence.

Naturally, it would be most irresponsible if *Eye* readers were to start ringing the Centre and impersonating Sam Chisholm. However, Lord Gnome is powerless to stop them.

WHEN *Sunday Times* hackette Janine di Giovanni appeared on the naff ITV publishing programme *You're Booked*, she was interviewed by one of the programme's heavyweight literary presenters, James Whale.

Waiting in the make-up room, di Giovanni decided to give her shoes a polish and to this end picked up a small brush that happened to be lying around. "You can't use that for your shoes," shrieked a make-up girl between guffaws of laughter. "That's James's beard brush."

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

ON 6 November the *Mail on Sunday* filled no fewer than two of its home news pages with a huge story about the novelist and scriptwriter Charlotte Bingham — billed as "a report that will disturb every woman".

While driving back from a dinner party in Wiltshire last July, the *Mail* reported, Bingham had got the feeling that she was being followed by a car full of men. She rang Salisbury police on her car-phone, but they pointed out that she was outside their area. When she tried Avon police, she was told that there were no squad-cars available ("it is a Saturday night, you know"). Still, it all ended happily: she got home to her husband, and the car that had been "following" her disappeared. And, er, that was it.

Her experience, though unpleasant, didn't quite seem to justify its apocalyptic billing. But the article certainly succeeded in giving plenty of publicity to la Bingham. On her way back from the dinner party, we learned, she began mentally "ticking off chores for her daughter's wedding in a few days' time. The caterers, the flowers, the seating plan..." After that, she turned her mind to "running through the plot of her next book, following her success with novels such as *To Hear a Nightingale* and her latest, *Change of Heart*. When she returned home, she planned to jot down ideas with her husband, the renowned playwright and author Terence Brady. They had collaborated on a number of television series, including *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Nanny* starring Wendy Craig..."

The *Mail* hackette who wrote this piece of puffery was one Candida Ogilvy. Oddly, the newspaper neglected to inform its readers of one small fact: that she is Charlotte Bingham's daughter — the very daughter, indeed, whose wedding was mentioned in the article.

HACKWATCH

David Mellor

WHEN David Mellor resigned as National Heritage Secretary, he was signed up by Peter Preston of the *Guardian* to write a weekly column on the arts. Two weekends ago, on the day that Dave's latest adultery was exposed, Preston gave the wretched man a further vote of confidence by announcing that he'd be happy to give Mellor a full-time job if he ever wanted one.

Why? Mellor is certainly no great prose-writer, as anyone who has waded through the quagmire of cliches in his *Grauniad* column will know ("never glad confident morning again", "therein lies the rub", "it was ever thus", etc etc). Nor does he have anything of interest to say. The column has a tiny repertoire of tricks: boasting about his enormous CD collection; whingeing about the tabloid newspapers which brought him down; and, above all, insisting ceaselessly that the Department of National Heritage has gone to the dogs since his resignation. The overall tone is one of overweening self-regard and pride. And, as a dedicated cliche-monger, Mellor ought to know what pride comes before.

Now read on...

18 March. Mellor is outraged by the *News of the Screws*'s exposure of Sir Peter Harding's affair with Bienvenida Buck. "The packaging of the Peter Harding story was the work of Max Clifford, a sleazeball's sleazeball if ever there was one... So debased have the standards of the tabloid press become, so great their feeding frenzy for sleaze, that they are happy to be putty in Clifford's hands." Could this by any chance be connected with the fact that Clifford also represents a certain Antonia de Sancha?

1 April. An attack on Rupert Murdoch, who is accused of "canting duplicity".

17 June. Mellor comments on the departure of the conductor Franz Welser-Most from the London Philharmonic. "Having come to terms, as others of us have had to do, with the consequence of hubris, he will probably do well but not alas in London."

24 June. Not for the first time, he rebukes his successor Peter Brooke for being "half-hearted" about using National Lottery money. "Surely," he pleads, "it's not too much to hope that we will soon have a minister unable to deny the irresistible logic of all this, and, more importantly, ready to do something about it." Such as himself, presumably.

21 July. "The retirement of Peter Brooke was the most predictable and sadly perhaps the most welcome feature of this reshuffle... he never seemed able or interested in raising his game to the level required to satisfy the demands of what is in truth one of the most difficult departments in Whitehall." But what of his replacement, Stephen Dorrell? "There is," Mellor notes loftily, "no reason to think that any deep or abiding passion for British culture lurks within his breast."

29 July. "So many words have been expended of late on the British Library that it will not be necessary for me to add many more." But he does feel obliged to mention that "when I took over the Department of National Heritage in 1992 I was quite clear what should happen": there should be an investigation into the library's cost. "More's the pity, as must now be apparent to all, that when I left the Department, that idea left with me." Meanwhile, he also finds space to lambast the *News of the World* for interviewing Leigh Gilbert, the lover of the alleged kidnapper of little Abbie Humphries. "The purchase and publication of this crap is just the latest incident in a summer full of sleazy decisions by the tabloids," he rages. "As the tabloids proceed on their rake's progress from the gutter to the sewer, someone somewhere really should give a damn."

29 August. In a speech at the Edinburgh television festival, Mellor attacks Rupert Murdoch, who has shown that he has "no long-term interest in Britain and its well-being."

13 September. Jeremy Hanley is being tormented by the press for his "gaffes". Mellor pops up in the London *Evening Standard* with a few words of sympathy. "Benjamin Disraeli, as usual, got it right: 'Today they blacken your character, tomorrow they blacken your boots.' " In other words, politicians mustn't think that some passing embarrassment will ruin their reputations and careers. Who can he have in mind?

20 September. "The trouble with living in this country," Mellor writes in the *Guardian*, "is that everything generates controversy. We are a rancorous people..." Especially with adulterous Tory MPs? No, he is writing about the plan to establish a visitors' centre at Edward Elgar's birthplace.

27 September. Mellor's *Guardian* column begins on an ominous note: "Another Great British Disaster may be in the offing..." But it turns out he is referring to the Millennium Commission. He takes the opportunity to deliver another swipe at Peter Brooke, whose attitude to the Commission was "confused".

11 October. Even-handed as ever, Mellor gives Stephen Dorrell another smack round the chops. "I wished him well when he was appointed, and still do. But I must be the candid friend, and warn him to take care. He has admitted to having no cultural passions. Fine, we've all got to start somewhere, but he shouldn't be in too much of a hurry to chuck out of the window the thinking of those of us who do, and who may, dare I say, have a more sophisticated understanding of the delicate ecology of the arts world than he has yet acquired."

28 October. Channel 4 announces that in 1995 David Mellor will front "a controversial new television show which will expose any whiff of scandal in the lives of the guests." On the programme — whose working title is *The Mellor Tapes* — guests will have to sit and squirm as he plays them "no-holds-barred video clips of the more embarrassing moments of their lives." Can this really be the man who says he has "come to terms" with the consequences of hubris?

1 November. The publication of Betty Maxwell's memoirs prompts Mellor to observe that we must never forget Cap'n Bob — "if only to remember that you could add up all the sins of all the members of the House of Commons, multiply them hundred-fold, and only then equal Maxwell's crimes."

4 November. With admirable recklessness, Mellor offers yet another hostage to fortune by turning up on *Clive Anderson Talks Back*, where he complains that the quest for politicians' peccadilloes has become a national blood sport. "The press love to find skeletons in a politician's cupboard, and if he's having it off with another skeleton so much the better," he quips. Still, he concedes, "if people in politics do stupid things they should be censured for it".

6 November. The inevitable nemesis arrives: Mellor's secret affair with Lady Cobham is splashed all over the *News of the Screws*. Hacks on his doorstep ask if he has anything to say. "There's no reason to," he replies. "It's not exactly the biggest deal, really."

7 November. Mellor appears on the *Today* programme and GMTV, furiously denying that he ever said the break-up of his marriage was no big deal. Alas for him, the remark was on tape.

8 November. Amid the chaos, Mellor still manages to produce his weekly arts column for the *Guardian*. "I'm back in the headlines again," he reveals. While claiming that he isn't "wallowing in self-pity", he goes on to suggest, self-pityingly, that he was targeted by the *News of the Screws* because of his speech attacking Murdoch at the Edinburgh television festival. "This is bullying, perhaps even sadism, and sooner or later it will surely have to stop." Having got that out of his system, he returns to his own preferred form of bullying — denouncing Peter Brooke and Stephen Dorrell for not living up to his own high standards at the Department of National Heritage. Sooner or later, he feels sure, "the government will realise something will have to be done". By giving the first National Heritage Secretary another chance, perhaps? It seems unlikely — but no less likely than the fact that attractive women seem to find David Mellor irresistible, or that such a blithering idiot can hold down a regular job in the Street of Shame.

RAIL NEWS

JOHN MacGregor, Sir Christopher Foster and Christopher Chope (see *Eyes passim*) aren't the only ones to have feathered their nests or those of their chums with the barmy rail privatisation scheme.

The programme has been hailed as the biggest legal project in the history of Britain; for once the rail network and associated support services have been separated into dozens of watertight compartments, train operators will have to negotiate hundreds of contracts to get anything to move. Even stopping a train at a station will require a legal agreement between station owner and train operator.

The Tories' only argument to justify privatisation is that private rail companies will be more responsive to the needs of the "market". But if amending a service involves dozens, if not hundreds, of fresh contracts, the private operators will find responding to the market too complicated and expensive — unless the market demands that a train service be abandoned.

The huge expense to travellers and taxpayers of engaging so many lawyers doesn't worry the Commons, which of course is stuffed with members of that selfless and honourable profession.

NEWS that American railroad company Burlington Northern has the US's worst record this year for running Amtrak passenger trains on time doesn't augur well for Britain.

Well over a quarter of US passenger trains run late, partly because they are accorded low priority by the private rail-freight companies whose tracks they use.

FACT: On the Burlington Northern freight system only 53.7 per cent of passenger trains have been punctual.

ANOTHER FACT: Burlington Northern is one of only two rail companies interested in taking on a franchise in Britain.

BRITISH stinginess has resulted in another cunning ploy to slow Channel tunnel trains as they crawl through Britain.

The Eurostar puffers, which speed through France at 160mph but drop to an arthritic hobble along Network SouthEast's crowded commuter lines, are due to start European services from places north of London in 1996.

To run direct from Edinburgh and Newcastle to Europe, minor modifications were planned to a rail tunnel at Hampstead. But as the deadline for settling the funding approached, cheap alternatives were pulled out of the hat. One forward-looking proposal involves sending the high-tech TGV-style trains into an old siding in Willesden, north London, where the trains have to reverse. Passengers would then sit and wait while the driver walks from his cab at one end of the 16-carriage train to the other — about a quarter of a mile.

Analysts at *Modern Railways* magazine believe it would be quicker for Scottish folk and Tynesiders to take the usual BR train to King's Cross and then the tube to Waterloo where they can pick up the Eurostar train to Europe. Or they could always fly.

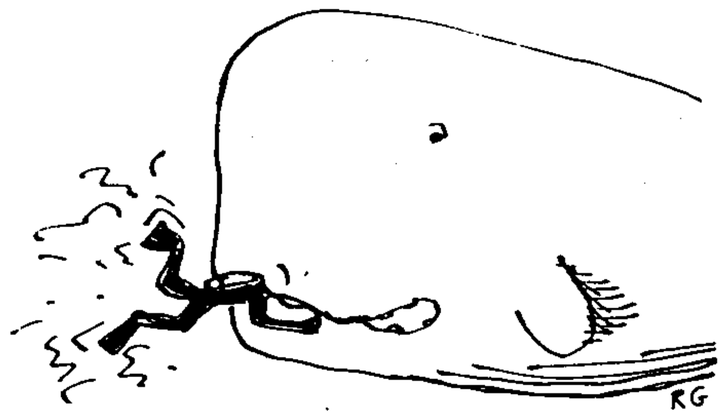
WATER NEWS

WELSH water the substance is just not lucrative enough for Welsh Water the company. In a recent presentation to financial analysts the firm has revealed plans to expand into Asia to build on its "wide range of infrastructure skills derived through ownership of a well-managed water and sewerage business".

People in Rhigos, at the top of the Neath valley, might take issue with this assessment. Their water supplies have been cut off 50 times in the last year. The problems stem from old mains pipes and an ancient pressure pump; and the result has been alternative supplies which are far from healthy, according to local residents. They claim the supplies have "not been fit for a pig to drink".

Still, fresh from trying to jump on to the private road building bandwaggon, Welsh Water bosses are now inviting other institutional investors to snuffle in the trough by establishing a fund for infrastructure development in the Far East.

Investors should consider Welsh Water's record on infrastructure development carefully. According to the National Rivers Authority, Welsh Water's own sewage and water system accounted for 898 pollution incidents in Wales, 30 percent of the total, last year — largely due to its "poor sewerage infrastructure".



"I'm conducting essential scientific research"

SIR Gordon Jones has left his day job as chairman of accident-prone chemicals company Hickson and Welch (*Eyes passim*).

Sir Gordon stepped down shortly before the Castleford-based firm appeared before Pontefract magistrates and admitted six charges of polluting the River Aire. It asked for 12 offences to be taken into consideration and was formally cautioned in three others. It was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,551 for the avoidable spillages.

These latest pollution cases were brought by the National Rivers Authority (NRA), but the company hopes to avoid other legal action dating from the period Sir Gordon was chairman — including a possible prosecution by Yorkshire Water (prop: Sir Gordon).

DOWN ON THE FARM

UNDER the aegis of the Science Museum, a specially formed "lay panel on plant biotechnology" met in London recently to discuss the genetic engineering of farm crops.

Among other things it considered the veterinary medicines licensing disaster which has allowed free distribution of nerve gas-based organophosphorous sheep dips. That a similar licensing system is being used for genetically engineered products does not augur well for effective control of this controversial new industry.

Chaired by Peter Evans, presenter BBC Radio 4's *Science Now*, the panel took note of the problems of a government approval body also being the investigator when things go wrong. It accepted that combining these functions presented "an opportunity for intellectual corruption" and recommended setting up "an independent ombudsman for monitoring investigative action".

Can we expect an "independent ombudsman" to investigate sheep-dip related poisoning? Incidents are currently investigated by the "intellectually corrupt" veterinary medicines directorate — which also happens to license the chemicals used for sheep dip, for a not inconsiderable fee.

ONLY months before the sleaze-ridden Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) reckons it is going to take over meat inspection from local councils, it still has not received parliamentary approval to go ahead. And it still cannot tell its slaughterhouse victims how much it is going to charge for its "services".

Nevertheless, the MHS estimates that it will need to extract upwards of £40 million a year from the meat industry to keep its staff in the luxury to which they hope to become accustomed. To help it on its way, the Maffia proposes new charging regulations to give this licensed theft parliamentary sanction.

Unlike the regulations they replace, this new instrument omits the maximum charge, previously imposed on local councils. It also drops the procedures which allowed slaughterhouse owners to appeal against individual charges. In short, the Maffia wants parliament to write the MHS a blank cheque.

This has not stopped MHS chief executive in waiting, Johnson McNeill, indulging in a magnificent example of "bureau-speak". He claims his £78,000 a year job gives him "a real opportunity to set up a first-class service which will be of benefit to all its customers".

"Customers"? McNeill needs to be reminded that the MHS is a regulatory agency imposed on the meat industry — which has absolutely no choice in the matter. As it is carrying out a level of meat inspection widely regarded as unnecessary, the MHS is no more a "service" than a mousetrap providing a "service" to mice.

However, at least the claim about being "first-class" has some merit. If parliament allows this disgusting organisation to go ahead, one aspect of the MHS will certainly be first class — the size of its rip-off.

ADDING to Richard Body's long-standing denunciation of the CAP (*Eye* 858), Christopher Gill, the stalwart Euro-sceptic MP for Ludlow, has come up with his own definition of the CAP. He calls it the "Collectivisation of Agricultural Production".

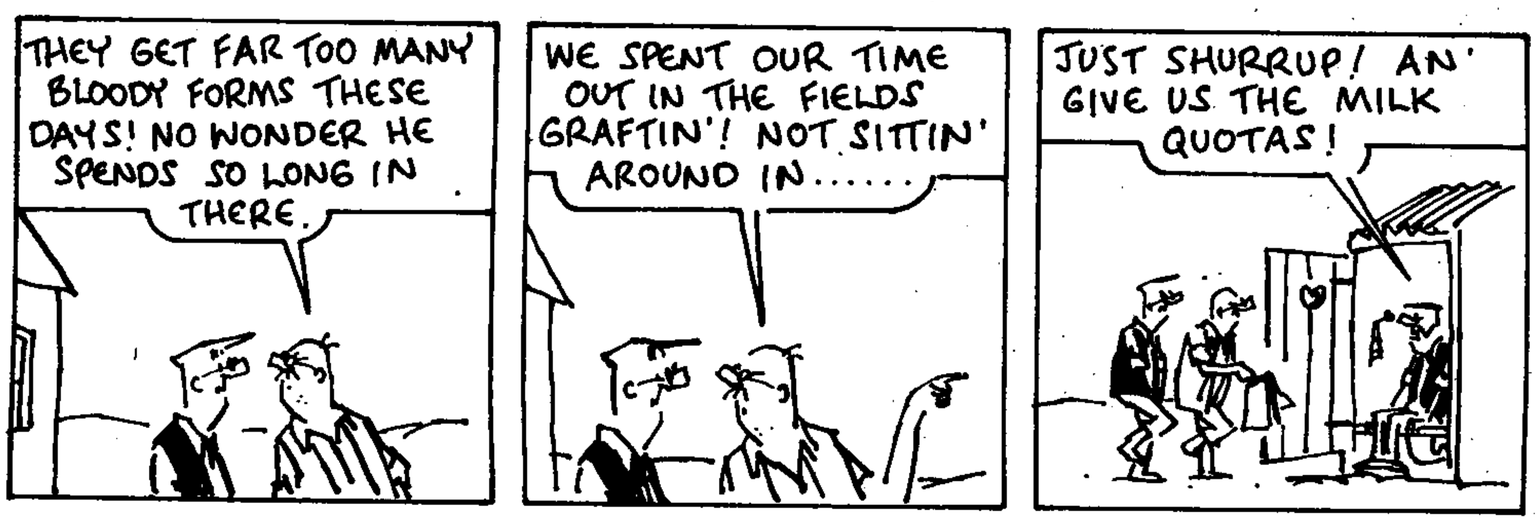
Since the common agricultural policy derives from plans originally prepared by the National Socialists (ie the Nazis) — the CAP blueprint was defined in the Nazi's 1942 *Europaische Wirtschaftgemeinschaft* (Economic Community) plan — Gill may not be too wide of the mark. The only pity is that many of his fellow Tories don't see it that way and tell nice Mr Major to pull out of this expensive mess.

RICHARD PACKER, permanent secretary to the Maffia, wants to change the name of his ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food (MAFFIA) to the simpler ministry of food (MOF). He claims the new title would give "a better appreciation of our activities than the normal journalistic shorthand which refers to the agriculture minister or ministry".

But could the real reason be that Packer is pig sick of having his ministry called the Maffia? Or, having virtually wiped out the fishing industry and with agriculture well on its way to destruction, is he simply acknowledging that his "mof-eaten" excuse for a ministry needs to be more aptly described?

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald


ALBERT
THEY GET FAR TOO MANY BLOODY FORMS THESE DAYS! NO WONDER HE SPENDS SO LONG IN THERE.
WE SPENT OUR TIME OUT IN THE FIELDS GRAFTIN'! NOT SITTIN' AROUND IN.....
JUST SHURRUP! AN' GIVE US THE MILK QUOTAS!

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

WANDSWORTH

THERE are worrying signs of mental instability among ruling Tories as councillors await the findings of the district auditor's inquiry into Wandsworth's loss-making housing policy.

Having spent the summer debating how to control *council finances*, a series of cuts were proposed last month. A cut of £2 million was agreed in the social services budget, and elderly residents can look forward to the closure of four day-care centres and luncheon clubs.

Disabled pensioners are also to be hit — if a budget saving proposal is agreed which would adversely affect 1,000 of the 1,600 who use the borough's free taxi scheme for the disabled.

However, at the same budget planning meeting big-hearted councillors agreed to give £15,000... to the Tooting branch of McDonald's. The money is to be spent on a "McLoo" for the disabled and a "McChildren's" play area at the crapburger chain's Tooting eatery.

Cutting luncheon clubs while helping to refurbish McDonald's with council money? Forward with Wandsworth!

BENT

IT HASN'T taken long for Bent's barmiest resident, former self-styled Madame Chairman Nkechi Amalu-Johnson, to recover from her brush with the courts.

Last month she was sentenced to 200 hours' community service for social security and mortgage fraud. She is now repaying the community by sitting on the management committee of the Heritage Family Centre nursery in Harlesden... and implementing a clever scheme for punishing naughty parents.

For every minute the parents are late in picking up their children after 6pm the nursery fines them £10. Even Bent council isn't happy with this and is investigating the running of the nursery to which it gives £45,000 a year.

Amazulu is unrepentant and plans to celebrate her lenient sentence by writing to ask the high court judge who sentenced her if she can do "200 hours more community service in the [Bent] town hall chamber".

WESTMINSTER

THE "homes for votes" mentality seems to be alive and well in Westminster and living (*sic*) in the borough's adult education service.

The service is in complete disarray. The director of education has been on sick leave for weeks; and the service is in the red by more than half a million pounds. Indeed, there are now plans to cut drastically certain classes — basic skills, language support for adults whose first language is not English, and social care, among them.

The classes that will be safe, however, include computing, business and photography/video. Can readers spot the difference between them? That's right. The latter are classes for bored or unemployed yuppies, while the lessons due for cutbacks are for people with learning disabilities, refugees, people without qualifications and anyone else who is extremely unlikely to vote Tory.

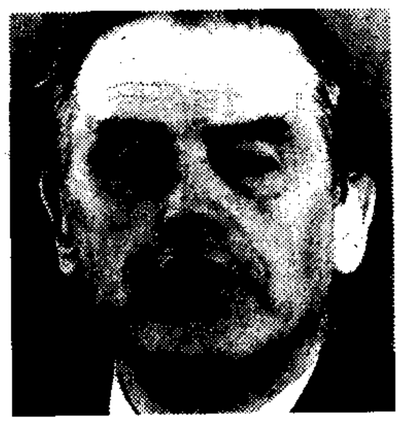
NATFHE, the further education teachers' union, says a registration fee has been introduced which many students cannot afford. They still come to classes but are no longer officially registered. This means they become invisible... and seemingly empty lessons can easily be closed.

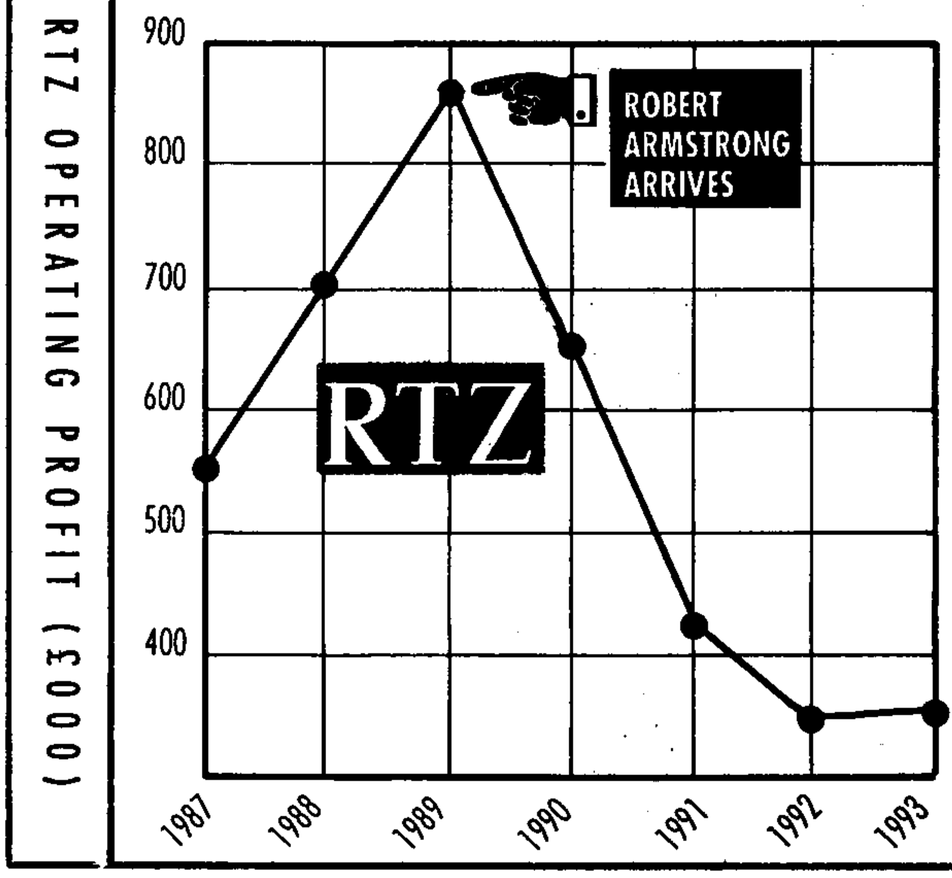
THE dirty tricks campaign against the objectors to the Lady Porter gang of gerrymanderers at Westminster City Council relies very largely on the *Evening Standard*, or Porter's Poodle as it is better known.

A smear job on objector Neale Coleman, a former Labour councillor, made the lead in the *Standard* Londoners' Diary of 31 October. Its chief charge (not denied) is that Coleman's father was a director of Ann Summers sex shops. The anonymous piece was written by Harry Phibbs, who forgot to declare his own long and passionate association with the Tory Party/Porter etc, etc.

The *Standard* also gave yards of space to Miles Young, leader of Westminster Council, who was pictured outside phone booths and huge piles of prostitutes' calling cards which his council have "cleaned up". There was no reference to the frequent visits Mr Young has been making to the district auditor's hearings on the homes-for-votes scandal in a desperate and so far successful campaign to keep his name off the list of councillors who should be surcharged. Cllr Young was chair of the council's Environment Committee which shrewdly spread its amenity programme (such as tree-planting) in the marginal wards.

British Management Part 5. SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG, former Cabinet Secretary, director RTZ since September 1988.





RTZ Operating Profit (£m)	
1987	£543
1988	£704
1989	£866
1990	£667
1991	£420
1992	£355
1993	£358

CREWE

THANKS to incompetence at the Labour-run council, people in Crewe face extra council tax payments of around £130 each.

The bureaucratic cock-up meant the council paid for a new town hall it didn't need and now can't afford.

Crewe borrowed £2.6 million when it built a new municipal block at the beginning of the 1990s. Interest payments were around £26,000 a year. In 1992 the council had a brainwave: why not pay off the outstanding loan and get rid of the interest payments? It seemed like a good idea, so Crewe repaid the loan with money it had saved to pay off debts. But council officers hadn't read a government circular advising local authorities against settling debts this way. Crewe must now put £2.6 million back into the pot it raided in 1992 and again find the cash for the new building.

Embarrassed councillors must finance the unforeseen repayments by cutting £250,000 a year from Crewe's services. This has reduced the council's credit approval rating to zero and forced officers to send out begging letters to prudent councils asking if they would take the debt off Crewe's hands.

PS: The offices Crewe council was previously using, which cost only £75,000 a year in rent, are still empty after four years.

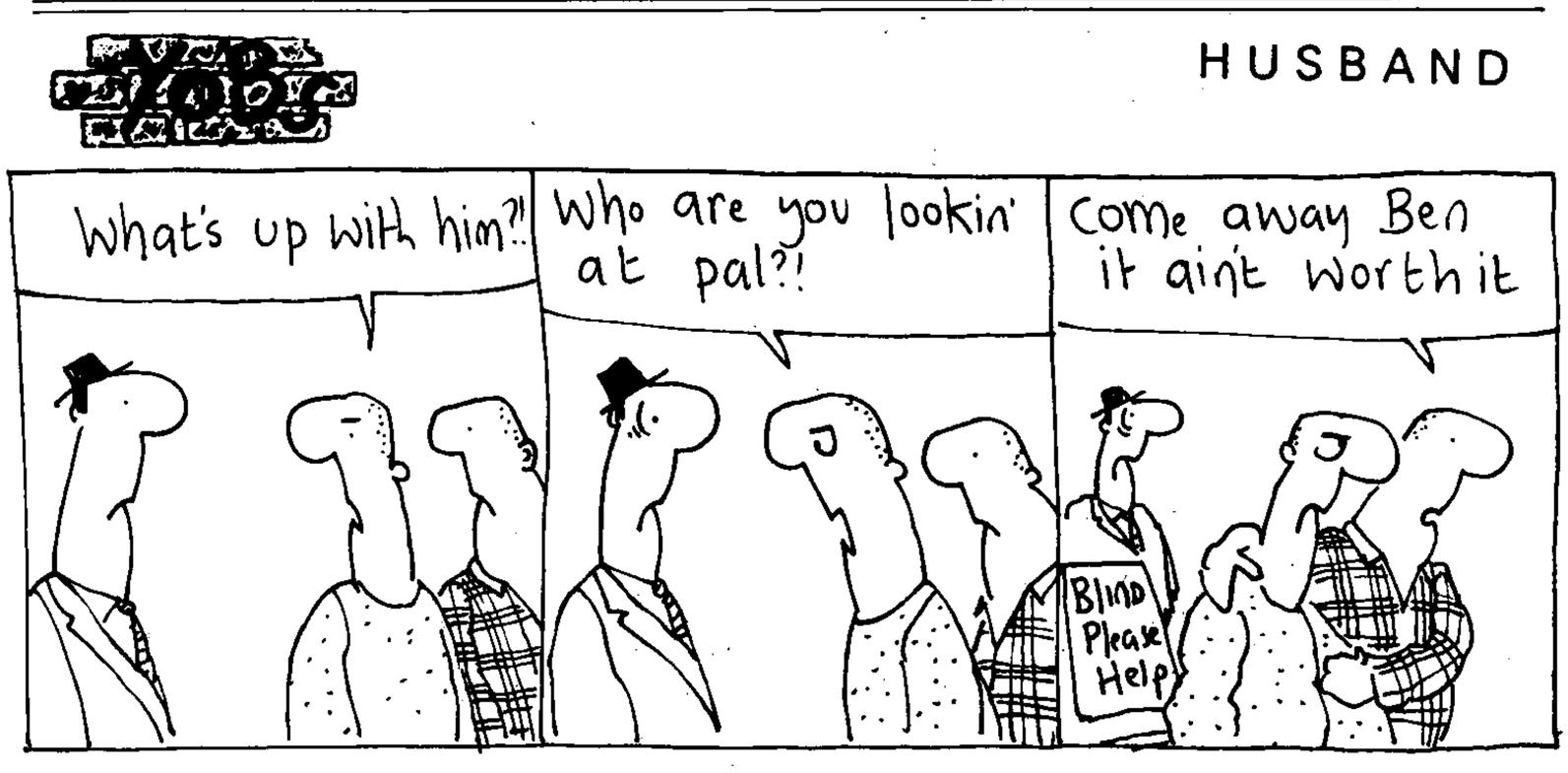
MANCHESTER

BRITAIN's dirtiest city has shot itself in the foot over plans to clean up the council-owned Heaton Park, Europe's biggest municipal open space.

Labour leaders have spent so much time dithering over a £1.5 million bid by the Messenger Leisure group to run the park's golf course that the firm has now pulled out.

Manchester can ill afford to snub investors, especially in the wake of last year's failed Olympic bid. So why has the impoverished council snubbed the chance of improving one of its most run down areas? The Messenger group is run by media mogul-turned-blockbuster novelist Eddie Shah and Manchester Labour Party has never forgiven Shah for "busting" the print unions during the 1983 *Stockport Messenger* dispute.

Of course, council leaders couldn't badmouth Shah openly so they held a public "consultation" exercise to "let the people decide", while ensuring that much anti-Shah propaganda filled the local press. Of course, no such PR exercise took place when it came to building Hulme, the Arndale Centre or running down the Manchester parks. Unsurprisingly, the Labour-voting Manchester public gave the thumbs down. Shah will now sue the council for wasting his time and money, including £250,000 spent at the council's behest.



DOING THE ROUNDS

STEPHEN EAMES, the likeable £65,000 a year boss of Havering hospitals trust in Essex, has sent himself on a £10,000 "working tour" of Madrid, Milan and Stockholm while his trust faces a projected £9 million "shortfall" and 150 of his staff face redundancy.

This follows the trust's inability to attract the custom of local GP fundholders, and the recent loss of a large ophthalmology contract (see *Eyes passim*).

Mr Eames was suggested for the trip by Gordon Best, a management consultant from the King's Fund. By sheer coincidence, Eames employs Best for the modest sum of £1,100 a day to advise him on how best to spend the public's money. Best also wrote an illuminating article in the *Health Service Journal* praising Eames as "an up and coming chief executive destined to go places under the Tory administration".

Eames has already enjoyed a three-week trip to Cuba this year but found time to award himself and his directors a 10 percent performance bonus. Trust chairman Geoffrey Jennings, a failed Tory politician, and board members Terry Williams (a Tory supporter) and Sir Robert McCrindle (a retired Tory politician) are right behind him.

At the trust's Oldchurch site, a 78 year old woman had to send home for a duvet last week because there were no blankets.

● EMERGENCY admissions to NHS hospitals rose by up to 13 percent last year, a sure sign that the nation's health is improving. Also up are hospital managers (by 56.9 percent in **South West Thames**; 37.1 percent in **Yorkshire**; and 28.3 percent in **South Western**). The overall five-yearly rise in NHS administrators is 334 percent from 4,610 to 20,010. Nurses and midwives have fallen by 9 percent over the same period.

● STAFF from **Durham ambulance service** face disciplinary action after lying to colleagues in **Northumbria** about the location of an emergency to get out of the job and ensure their shift finished on time.

The family of Mr Harry Dent, who was in agony after a brain haemorrhage, had to make five 999 calls to the squabbling crews before help arrived. Mr Dent died in hospital.

● A SURGEON at **Doncaster Royal Infirmary** has written to medical director Dr John Finbow complaining about inadequate cleaning in his operating theatre: "There was a large amount of congealed, clotted and dried blood on the mattress and some was running down the side of the table in streams." He also found suture material and debris on the floor and blood smeared on the theatre wall. "I, my patients and the public expect the theatres to be clean", he concluded.

● **BATH's Royal United Hospital NHS trust** is running a bit short. The operational overspend to 31 August 1994 was £547,000, and the structural overspend £1,976,000.

At **London's St Thomas's trust**, the general surgeons have "over-performed" to the tune of £470,354 and the brakes have been applied. No patients are to be operated on until April 1995 except for those in the following categories: "18-month waiters, urgents, emergencies, GP fundholder patients, approved extra contractual referrals, tertiary referrals, dreadnoughts, foreign office and day cases."

● MRS BOTTOMLEY'S incredible new deal for junior doctors reaches a climax next month when no one is supposed to work more than 56 hours a week. Unfortunately, many are still exceeding 100.

The aims of the deal (to reduce the hours worked from inhuman to merely excessive, and to protect the public from the mistakes of knackered doctors) have not quite filtered through to the management at **Birmingham's Heartlands hospital**, who have used it as a cost cutting exercise.

Contracted (ie, paid) hours have been cut while actual hours remain the same, and the level of medical cover has fallen so the job has become more stressful. The only document the juniors have received from personnel relating to the deal has been a rather tactless comparison of how much the hospital is going to save because of it. Many are losing more than £200 a week.

Heartlands has also received a large wad of DoH cash to cut waiting times for elective surgery. Consultants have been brought in from outside to operate in their spare time, and the queue has indeed shortened. Unfortunately there has also been a noticeable rise in readmission rates for complications such as wound infections. These will probably end up costing the hospital more than it gained from the waiting list initiative, but at least they won't sully Mrs Bottomley's selective statistics.

● A SURVEY of 400 GPs has found that a third of the fundholders do not support the scheme and felt pressured to join. 75 percent said fundholders in their area were given priority for services and 90 percent said it would be fair if fundholding applied to all GPs or to none. Only 10 percent of fundholders had enough time to keep abreast of medical developments, and 98 percent of the entire sample said the reforms had lead to more bureaucracy.

● THE TRUTH behind the managerial resignations at **Burnley general hospital NHS trust** (of chief executive Maggie Aikman and medical director Dr Sam Pickens) seems unlikely to emerge now severance payments have been agreed.

Mrs Aikman did go bleating to the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* before her pay-off, claiming that chairman James Rawson asked her to resign "to save his own neck". Mr Rawson apparently told her that he had the backing of the trust board but she subsequently found out the non-executive directors had no inkling of the resignation plea. "I'm a scapegoat... my GP has said I should have a fortnight off work." Dr Pickens was a tad more altruistic: "I'm stepping aside in the interests of patients and the 3,900 staff who have had no say whatsoever in the recent dispute."

● THOUGHT For The Day: Professor Steven Hirsch has been trying (unsuccessfully) to find an acute psychiatric bed in London every day for the last four months.

M.D.

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

AS Robin Sibson took up residency as the new vice chancellor at the university of Kent, the gardening team responsible for tending the campus lawns was under threat of dismissal.

Savings were needed, and a cheaper private company was being sought (another scheme was to charge for the previously free university car park).

However, the university's belt tightening wasn't so drastic that £60,000 couldn't be spent on refurbishing Sibson's charming rent-free Canterbury residence and landscaping its splendid grounds. Of course the garden had to be just right — so shrubs and trees were transported from Sibson's former home in Bath to Kent where they were lovingly transplanted.

The budget was also stretched to convert a section of the registry to include a private en suite bathroom for the vice chancellor at an estimated cost of £16,000. No doubt the gardeners think it is money well spent.

Pre-School Nursery Facility Rhymes

Simple Simon
Told the pie-man
Going to the fair,
"I'm off to get an NVQ
In Health and Social Care."

Letters

Reg Forrester

Sir,

Whilst I appreciate that PRIVATE EYE *would not be* PRIVATE EYE *without its mischievous, satirical approach to politics, I do believe cancer patients and their families should be exempt from this approach.*

Reg Forrester died on Saturday, 5 November, after giving 35 years of public service. Clearly the care package he received was absolutely appropriate for a terminally ill man who wanted to spend his last days at home with his family. The article has caused needless hurt to his family and friends and we would greatly appreciate your not commenting on this matter again.

Otherwise, we're all great fans of PRIVATE EYE *and await your next disclosure with amusement and trepidation...*

Yours sincerely,
COUNCILLOR NIKKI WOODHEAD-PAGE,
Westminster Council Conservative Group.

Field work

Sir,

I realise that all your PRIVATE EYE *journalists are too busy to keep track of reality but I really must point out that despite your piece on me in your issue dated 21 October, I have not been working in the pr business for two years.*

Although the agency I founded still bears my name, I sold it some years ago and it was announced in almost all the national press, some even on the front page, that I resigned as chairman a year ago. I have never met Matthew Bannister and have nothing to do with Radio One.

For the record, I'm currently working as a columnist for the EVENING STANDARD *as well as broadcasting and chairing Radio Viva.*

I would be really grateful if you could inform your team that Lynne Franks, the person, no longer works in the field of public relations and inaccurate stories like this cause unnecessary bother all way round.

Yours sincerely,
LYNNE FRANKS,
London W9.

On the job

Sir,

Your STREET OF SHAME *correspondent is nearly right about the* OBSERVER, *Fenby, myself and assorted matters. But three things need to be corrected.*

First, the salary involved was thought to be around £350,000, plus car, free pedicure, Green Shield stamps, etc. Second, I never got offered it. I did get pushed down the stairs, kneed in the groin and told to piss off by a Mr Anthony Bevins, political editor of the OBSERVER, *which almost certainly did constitute a job offer. But that was all, guv. Third, though I would dearly have loved to be known as Red Andy at Cambridge, I don't think I ever was. Podgy Andy, maybe. Or spotty Andy. Even Andy with the gas problem. But not Red Andy.*

More to the point are all these destabilising rumours from the OBSERVER. *Everyone says they are spread around by agents of the ageing Alan Rusbridger, who is getting bored waiting for Preston to retire to a suite at the Ritz and wants to oust J. Fenby. Is this true?*

Yours,
ANDREW MARR,
The Independent.

Farmers are to be offered up to £150 a hectare to allow geese to gaze unhindered on land in the Caerlaverock area of Dumfriesshire.

Daily Telegraph

Oxford blues

Sir,

Only the other day, for no particular reason, I thought of Joyce, the glorious Oxford eccentric who used to camp it up on the Cornmarket, obstructing the buses. And today your Funny Old World column carries a report of his death. I'm sad at the news, but glad to see Joyce immortalised in your pages.

If anyone doubts the Oxford Times account, I, all my family and many of my friends from childhood in Oxford can guarantee its truth and can provide plenty more Joyce stories. The account describes his high heels and blue nylons, fish-net tights and chiffon scarf and his penchant for stripping off in the city centre. Easily done, as most of the time the scarf and high heels were all he wore, apart from a pair of skimpy briefs. I remember a cold day round about this time of year when my mother and I encountered him at the top of St Aldate's Street, wearing nothing but the aforementioned briefs, scarf and heels and a clear plastic rain hat. He was wobbling like a huge pink marshmallow, waving a blaring radio about. "I'm Puss-in-Boots! I'm Puss-in-Boots! I married my mother, you know," he told us.

I shall never forget him, so thank you for giving his obituary some nationwide publicity.

Yours sincerely,
ANTONIA LLOYD-JONES,
London W14.

Giving the game away

Sir,

There was more than a touch of the snoot (of the kind you condemned in another person's book) in MD's piece on Doncaster rugby league club. Indeed, it smacked of the kind of attitude that led to the breakaway of league a hundred years ago, when those who had no need to work denied money for expenses to those who couldn't afford to take time off work to play games.

For the record, I know of only one person who earns his living entirely from "professional" rugby league (he's a groundsman): all the others have jobs in teaching, building, plumbing, etc, and still play for expenses in their spare time. Only those for whom "league" is (sorry, was) a dirty word would regard £20,000 over two years paid to over 20 people for PR work as excessive.

I don't know how much one addict costs us per year, but with the cost of court costs, rehab, replacement of heroin with methadone, hospital treatments, etc, I would have thought that saving one kid would make this a pretty good bargain. Perhaps M.D. should turn his/her attention instead to the hypocrisy of those who make money from drugs, like those who run adverts for cigarettes, perhaps? Like, er, PRIVATE EYE*?*

Yours faithfully,
L.M. WILSON,
York, N. Yorks.

O·B·N·K

I am confident that Mr Preston will handle himself with the same quiet dignity that he has displayed throughout the affair.

ANDREW RAWNSLEY
The Observer
(owned by The Guardian)

We are privileged to have in Prince Charles the ideal candidate for the Crown. He has been trained not only in responsibility and efficacy in the exercise of "manly" virtues (navy, sport, etc), but also in music and philosophy. He has a deep love of nature, a high aesthetic desire and a compassion for the living environment and for his people, which is enhanced by his first-hand knowledge of much human pain. In all these ways, he is fit to be king.

YEHUDI MENUHIN
The Independent

Submitted by Bob Heys, Robert Jackson.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Lest we forget

Sir,

My sympathies to Ronald Reagan and his family on being told he has Alzheimer's Disease.

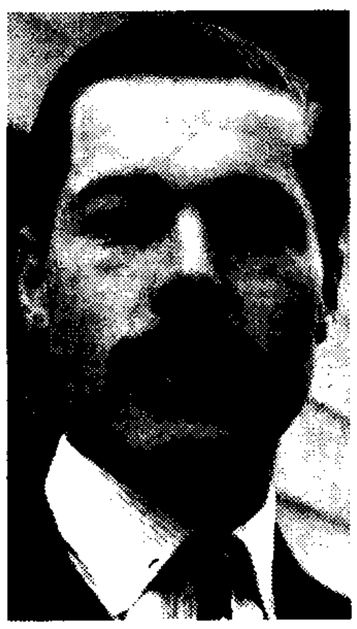
I am surprised, however, that it is being described as incurable. As regular readers of your organ are aware the revolutionary Saundersheimer treatment has proved effective in at least one case.

The treatment involves being banged up in one of Her Majesty's prisons. Unfortunately, this means that this Alzheimer's equivalent of Lourdes is not available to Ronnie or my Mother, a fellow sufferer, since they have never been convicted of a criminal offence.

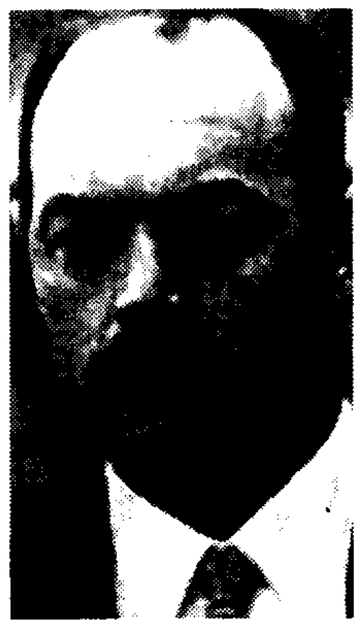
Perhaps you would like to print the address of the Alzheimer's Society so recipients of miracle cures could send substantial donations.

Regards,
JOHN DAVIES,
via Compuserve.

Lookalike



Grobbelaar



Lucan

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the similarity between 'Honest' Bruce Grobbelaar and 'Lucky' Lord Lucan?

I think we should be told.

Yours,
MATTHEW LEYS,
London N4

Court in the act

Sir,

The oddness of THE TIMES*'s lack of coverage of the McLibel case (Street of Shame,* EYE *858) is even greater than you suggest.*

For one thing the case has not been running at the high court for "many weeks", rather, for many MONTHS*. It started back in June, and will run until at least next April!*

For another thing, THE TIMES *is almost the last non-specialist publication to give space to lengthy court reports, and the McLibel case is very far from short of legal interest. For instance: McDonald's submitted before the case started that because the part dealing with nutrition and health was so technical, then the whole case would have to be heard without a jury; but, having succeeded in excluding a jury, their lawyers have now conceded virtually the whole of the defendants' position over the nutrition and health issue.*

EYE *readers who are unfortunate enough to rely on* THE TIMES *for their news coverage might do well to drop in and see the McLibel fun for themselves (Court 35, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2).*

Yours chewing a carrot quietly at the back of the court,

KEITH LUCAS,
London WC1.

Fit of laughter

Sir,

I have to confess to total mystification that anyone would see fit to defend the abysmal offering that is KNOWING ME, KNOWING YOU... WITH ALAN PARTRIDGE *(Square Eyes,* EYE *857; Letters,* EYE *858). I have not been so horribly embarrassed by British "comedy" since the Montreal comedy festival earlier this year (where we wittily sent along a farting Midlander called something along the lines of "Captain Flatulence").*

Given some of the superb comedy that we can and have produced over the years, surely this dismal programme should be buried with the lack of honour that it deserves? I, for one, would happily officiate.

Yours sincerely,
TIM DEDOPULOS,
via demon.co.uk.

In Unison

Sir,

Cllr Ovenden, leader of the Kent county council Labour group, accuses the EYE *of concealing the fact that I am not unemployed. I fail to see his point. I took a social work post in Greenwich after being refused an interview in Kent in 1992.*

He sidestepped the issue of my victimisation for trade union activity by stating that the director of social services had a number of reasons for not employing me. Cllr Ovenden did not specify these reasons.

The industrial tribunal to which I appealed was less reticent. Their written conclusion was that "it would be unrealistic if we did not draw the conclusion that a major part of the reasons for the council's refusal to re-employ Mr Harrison was because of his past trade union activities". The tribunal ruled against me because they interpreted the law to mean that discrimination in recruitment on the grounds of trade union MEMBERSHIP was illegal, but not on the grounds of trade union ACTIVITY. "A trade union member need not be active"(!) This is a legal precedent giving the green light to victimisation. My union, UNISON, is taking the matter to appeal.

Yours sincerely,
COLIN HARRISON,
Rochester, Kent.

Trampled

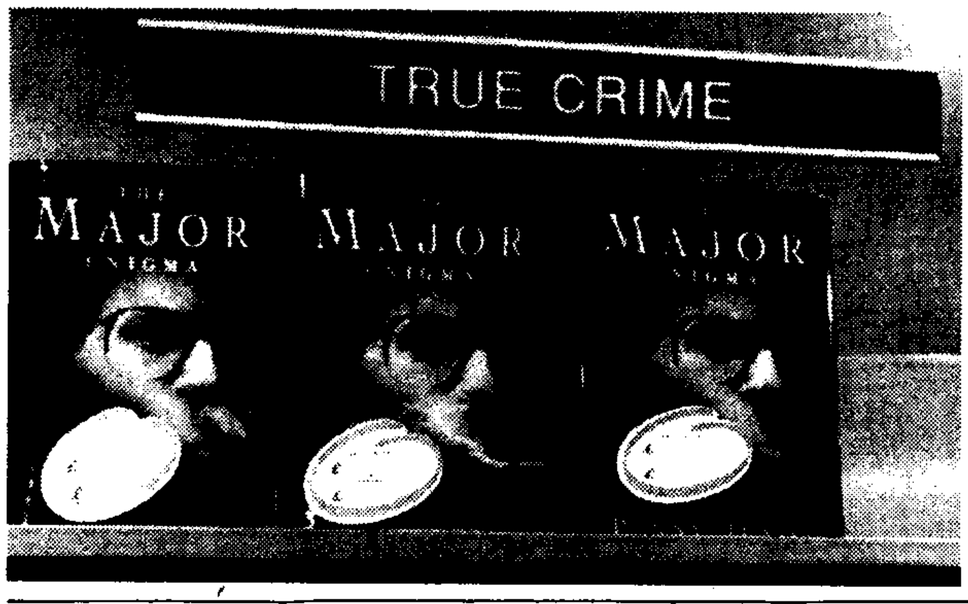
Sir,

*The slagging-off of Manchester's superb tram system continues (*EYE *858).*

Surely, nothing to do with the fact that we got it before "the asshole of the universe" (London, for those readers who do not remember Bazza Mackenzie's quote, circa 1970)?

Yours,
PHILIP READING,
Bolton.

"We've decided to take the Tunnel"



I-SPY

Penguin Bookshop, Camden Town

Submitted by Paul Ross. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Naughty Mariella

Sir,

A joke's a joke but now you're taking liberties. Not content with shirking your duties as journalists of integrity by littering your fanzine with my name; solely to fill space, you have now taken to plundering my column. Were it merely plagiarism I would accept it as a compliment. However to criticise one of my items when on the same page you had the audacity to use it as the inspiration for a Ken Pyne cartoon is below the belt. In lieu of damages (or indeed a fee) perhaps I could be forwarded the 38p per minute you receive from those nominating Frostrup as a suitable replacement for Windsor.

Yours etc,
MARIELLA FROSTRUP,
London W11.

Sir,

In response to Square Eyes' critique of LOOK WHO'S TALKING... WITH MARIELLA FROSTRUP *— they were LEMONS, darling, LEMONS — not pears. Make of THAT what you will, but they were in fact a sad attempt by the designer to get her set mentioned on your page. I knew that you would not be able to resist writing about the show.*

Oh, and the BIG ISSUE *was mine. I put it down in the supper break and then couldn't find it.*

Sweet really, is it not, how such dull mundanities can create such inspirational thoughts.

Yours faithfully,
MAGGIE HOWAT,
Designer, London W5.

Handy man

Sir,

Can I just say that I think Craig Brown is only good for two things — but is he any good at DIY?

Yours,
SUZANNE MOORE,
Guardian Newspapers Limited.

Odd job

Sir,

As Suzanne Moore of THE LAST WORD *(thoroughly and justifiably pilloried in the Diary of* EYE *858) is of the opinion that men are only good for sex and DIY, might I suggest she tries a little DIY sex and thus succeed in doing without men altogether?*

Yours,
DEBBIE A. SPEARING,
London SW16.

Padded out

Sir,

Drop the dead Andrew Neil/Brillo joke. I saw him on the Frost programme some weeks ago, and he now looks just like Tintin.

Yours,
MIKE MITCHELL,
Failsworth, Manchester.

Mac user

Sir,

It's some time since I read PRIVATE EYE *so imagine my surprise when I picked up a copy (858) and discovered you now have "Access For Anoraks". I was overjoyed and immediately went and put on my anorak in order to send you this.*

Yours on the information super-highway etc.

ANORAK,
via demon.co.uk.

Please address letters for publication to Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or e-mail to strobes@cix.compulink.co.uk

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"The United forward line, like professional undertakers, are now dancing on the graves of their opponent's defence."
COMMENTATOR, Radio Lancashire
(Anne Davies)

"There is a vast degree of sleaze, more than actually exists."
ROBIN OAKLEY, BBC News
(Brian Blacker)

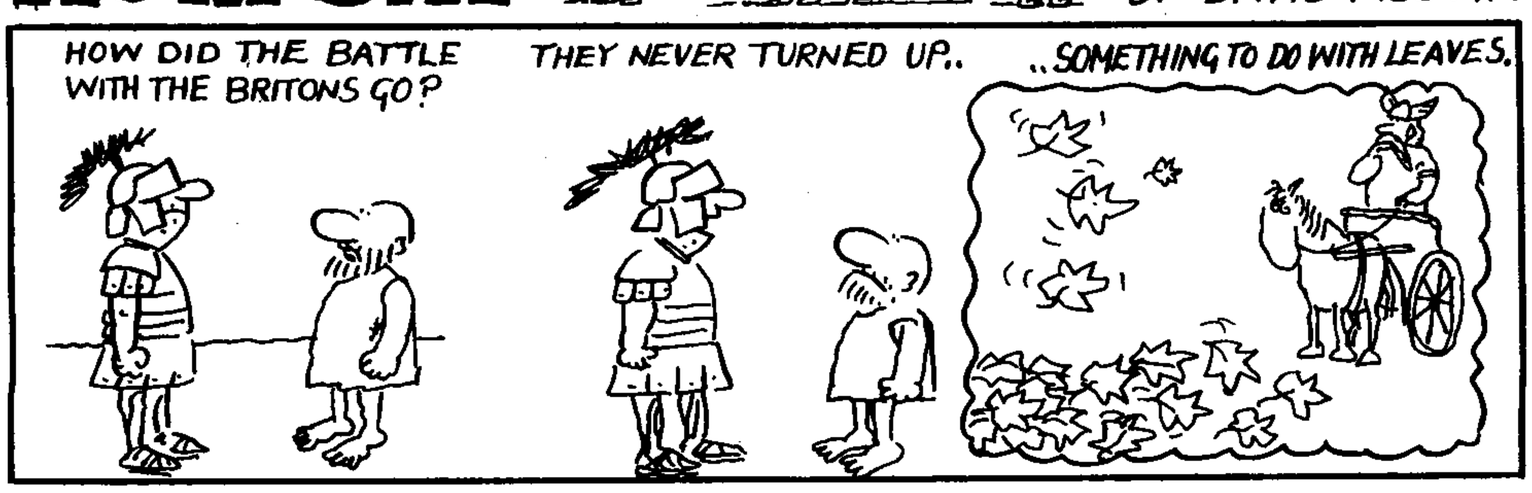
"... and some 500 Italians made the trip, in a crowd of only 400."
DAVID SMITH, Eurogoals
(P. Fagan)

"Give him his head and he'll take it with both feet or hands."
BOBBY GOULD, Sky Sport
(Clare Christopher)

Luke Jennings: *Where do you get your eggs?*
M. Roux: *From a chicken.*
ES Magazine
(J. Dover)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



KURD AID

FOREIGN secretary Douglas Hurd and home secretary Michael Howard have more than just a bit of ministerial lawbreaking in common — both behave shabbily towards Kurdish people.

Hurd actually appeared on Turkish television last month to apologise that London could not ban Kurdish separatist groups from campaigning in Britain; while Howard, our discredited home secretary, finally dreamed up an excuse for the bizarre arrest of Kani Yilmaz, European representative of the Kurdish Workers' party, at Westminster underground station.

Pressure on Britain to clamp down on Kurds has intensified recently, and Yilmaz's arrest was almost certainly in response to a call from the Turkish embassy. The brutal Ankara regime wields increasing leverage now as lucrative privatisations are in the offing — as well as arms contracts to supply the sort of material that has enabled the Turkish state to kill 11,000 Kurds in 10 years.

According to human rights campaigners, Yilmaz was severely tortured during his ten years in jail in Turkey. Nevertheless, he was detained on his way to a meeting with British MPs and peers.

Having insured maximum publicity by the timing of his arrest, the home office at first tried to claim Yilmaz had entered Britain illegally. But when Kurdish human rights activists who met him at Heathrow revealed that Yilmaz had been fast-forwarded through immigration by special branch officers like some sort of VIP, Howard decided to claim it had all been an error.

"I had earlier decided that he should be excluded from the country for reasons of national security," Howard told his Labour shadow, Jack Straw. If he was such a national security threat, why was this his fifth legal visit to Britain in less than 18 months?

Germany — where Yilmaz has had refugee status for more than two years — has now solved Howard's problem of having to dream up a charge by requesting Yilmaz's extradition on allegations of arson. The request will avoid drawing undue attention to the 1971 immigration act which allows for summary deportation without trial, charge or legal representation.

Only an appeal to the European court has prevented a Sikh, Haramjit Singh Chahal — jailed under such conditions for more than four years — from being deported back to India. Like Chahal, Yilmaz's main crime may have been to campaign too effectively against widespread killings in his homeland.

UN NEWS

WHO says United Nations secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali's boys have no sense of humour?

Next year the UN holds its ninth congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders — and the chosen venue is Naples, HQ of the, er, Mafia.

The Italian government will pump untold billions of lire into the city for the occasion, and local mobsters will pump it out again just as quickly.

Silvio Berlusconi, if he is still prime minister and unless he becomes "unavailable" like so many of his colleagues — will open the gathering. Pavarotti will act as some sort of special ambassador — presumably to drown out any mobster canary who tries to sing.

JUST because UN forces in Bosnia hold the Bosnian government responsible for Serb shells on cities and civilians, one might get the idea that General Sir Michael Rose is another Serb-loving, Muslim-hating British or French officer.

It is true that he writes over-friendly letters to war criminals like General Ratko Mladic, the Serb commander. But we can authoritatively deny that Rose frequently uses the terms "wogs" to refer to the Muslims or that he tells his junior officers that history will hold the "wogs" responsible for the whole war.

This just cannot be true.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "I can't see what all the fuss is about," Robert Scott Cheuvront told reporters as he left the Lakeland Regional Medical Center in Florida. "It's the sort of accident that could happen to anyone. How about some sympathy?"

Press interest in Cheuvront, 33, who was being treated for severe bruising of the genitalia, had begun when a clerk at the Scottish Inn motel made a 911 call at 4.45 that morning, informing police that "one of our guests is stuck in the swimming pool... it's kinda hard to explain." Officer Calvin Thomas reported what he found on arrival: "There was a lot of toilet paper floating around and as I approached Cheuvront, who was half under water, I could see that his pants were down to his knees and his penis was stuck in a suction hole on the north side of the swimming pool. When he saw me, he began screaming: 'Under no circumstances contact my wife' and tried to free himself, but he was stuck fast. We shut off the pump, but his penis had swollen up so much that we still couldn't release him, so we had to call the underwater paramedics. They poured lubricant around the suction fitting, but it was another two hours before they could free him and even then he had a 6-meter pipe still attached to his groin. At first we felt we ought to prosecute him, but there's no law covering unlawful sexual intercourse with a rubber chlorinator nozzle. But I'd still like to know what the toilet paper was all about." *(The Tampa Tribune, 25/7/94. Spotter – Philip Le Quesne)*

—●—

● "Fear and disbelief today gripped the villagers of Bura Ndogo, when they woke to find a live chicken, wrapped in a white shroud with a toothpaste tube inserted in its anus, half-buried on top of the grave of an unknown man who died a year ago."

Reporter Jeremiah Mnene was telling the audience of Kenya TV's Evening News about the

strange events in Bura Ndogo: "Villagers say they have never seen such a wicked thing before, and believe the chicken was buried there by a witchdoctor, to stop the dead man being haunted. Ghosts are said to be afraid of chickens, and the red and white stripes in the toothpaste are believed to be able to drive evil spirits away.

"Bishop Benjamin Nzimbi from the Church of the Province of Kenya condemned the ritual, denounced all witchdoctors as 'great liars who peddle lies' and travelled to Bura Ndogo to examine the evidence for himself. But, unfortunately, before he arrived a local musician known as Kata unwrapped the shroud, removed the toothpaste tube, and took away the chicken, saying he was going to prepare it for his evening meal. He staggered away with the evidence in the direction of Taita, and has not been seen since." *(The Standard [Kenya], 18/7/94. Spotter — Ian Leech)*

Compiled by
VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

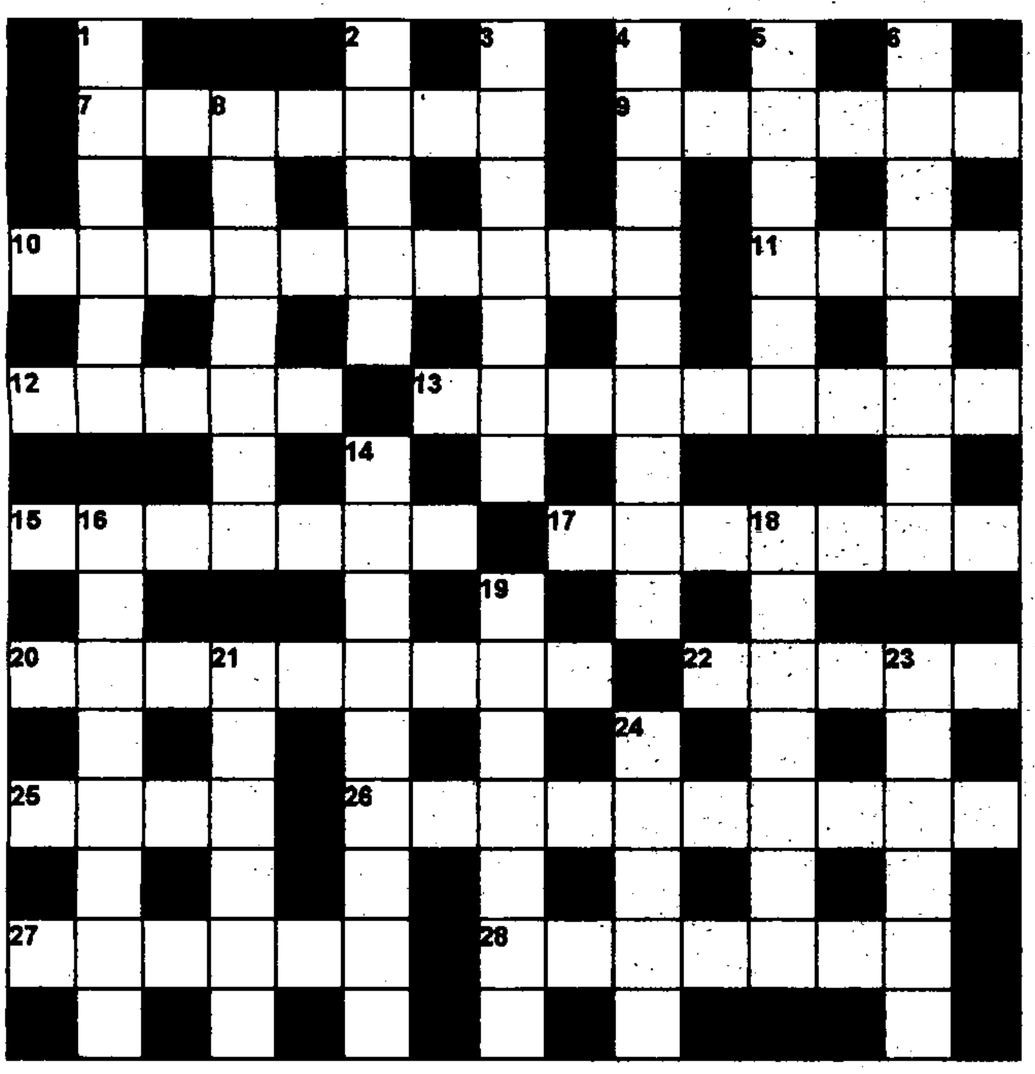
—●—

● *"Fresh saliva is now our store's number one seller," Shukan Isomura of the Wakayama company told a trade conference in Takarazuka City. "No sooner do we put the bottles onto the shelves than they are sold out, and our only fear is that supplies may dry up."*

Fresh saliva is the latest specialist product to be marketed by the Wakayama company, aimed at Japanese men with an obsessive interest in joshikosei *(female high school students). "Last year we began selling* joshikosei *used panties in our stores, and sales are so good that we've invested in vending machines for them. But fresh saliva from* joshikosei *is proving to be even more popular. For 3,000 yen, customers get a 50ml bottle with a photograph of the donor on the label, and our Tokyo store is selling 300 units a week. Freshness is all, so we keep it refrigerated and guarantee that it's not more than seven days old. It's now easier for the girls to sell their saliva than their panties and, if we can get regular supplies, we're planning to start bottling* joshikosei *menstrual fluid next year."* (Mainichi Daily News [Japan], 8/5/94. Spotter — Michael Fitzpatrick)

EYE CROSSWORD 15 by Cyclops

£100 Winner F. WOLSEY



ACROSS

7/20 Members' asking price (4,3,9)
9 Oliver North shaken after organ removed by hatchet-man with poor track record (6)
10 Stroke Brenda for a bribe (10)
11 Depression time for the prime minister (4)
12 Worry about Labour leader? She might very well do (5)
13 Police horse was a political blunder for Kennedy (3,2,4)
15 That is NATO's pisspoor state in N. Europe (7)
17 Cause to be visually challenged (7)
20 (see 7)
22 Thatcher drastically reduced child allowance (5)
25 Prison unrest (4)
26 Feel Di's all froth and a dangerous source of power? (10)
27 Embarrassed to know a Labour left-winger? (3,3)
28 One who cleans up — at the taxpayer's expense, as the *Mail* would have it? (7)

DOWN

1 Bob to go in for the Order of the Brown Nose — makes terrible reading (6)
2 Watchdog frequently seen round W1 (5)
3 Trendy leader: turd floating on water according to the Quebecois (7)
4 Girl gobbling toff — but it was a disaster for Welsh sheep! (9)
5 Happen by chance to have whip raised? (4,2)
6 Country wench with wicked pout, right on top (8)
8 UK sonar device ousted president... (7)
14 ... "milking us rotten," his people cried when he'd gone (3,2,4)
16 Occupier of no standing (8)
18 Where students were cruelly put down with nasty jibe in German capital (7)
19 Shrink one with salty concoction (7)
21 Castro keen to contain coup (6)
23 Diana penetrated by the Spanish outgoing president (6)
24 Terry's biog had him doubled up (5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 25.11.94. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 14

ACROSS: 8 Lashings 9 Lahore 10 Alkali 11 Optimist 12/5 The Gunpowder Plot 15 Gulf War 17 Tabards 19 House Of Lords 22 Portillo 24 French 25 Regina 26 Tuckered.

DOWN: 1/20 Sally Deedes 2 Thrash 3 In Disgrace 4 Osborne 5 (see 12) 6 The Media 7 Arms Trade 13 Oval Office 14 Hush Money 16 Fountain 18 Y-Fronts 20 (see 1) 21 Screw 23 Leak.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

As I have been trying to make clear to people every day for the past three weeks, the sleaze factor is completely behind me. This was very well shown today when the daily resignation reported in the Telegraph was of a Mr Martin (whom I had not heard of) who did not resign because of the sleaze at all. Oh no. He told the reporters: "I am resigning because I want to be free to say that the government is totally incompetent."

This is very good news indeed. It shows that no one is concerned with sleaze any more, and they have now returned to the real issues, ie is the government competent or not. Which of course it is. Particularly now the sleaze is over. Oh yes.

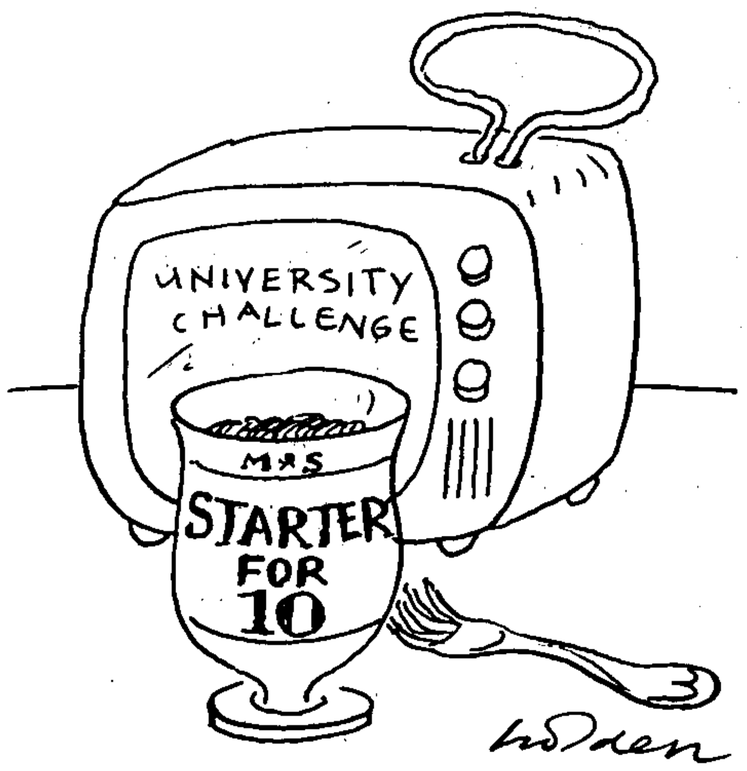
Tuesday

We had a very good Cabinet meeting today, when we discussed what the Queen might say in her speech next week. We all agreed that the most important thing we could think of for the future of Britain was to sell off the Post Office. As Mr Clarke explained, this would raise billions of pounds, which would enable him to cut taxes and win us the next election. Mr Heseltine broke off from doing his Canadian Air Force exercises in the corner to say that this was a very cynical view, and that the real reason for privatising the Post Office was to make it more competitive. "We live in the age of the fax," he said. "No one sends letters any more." To prove it he showed us all hundreds of letters he had received supporting this view. Most of them were from a man called Mr Cockburn.

We were just about to vote in favour of this very sensible proposal when Mr Hanley burst into the room. "This is no time to ask us for help with your crossword," I told him in my very stern voice. "This is an important Cabinet meeting, as you can see." But Mr Hanley said nothing, and put six letters on the table in front of me. They were all from Tory MPs saying that they would vote against selling off the Post Office. I was in no small measure annoyed with Mr Heseltine for trying to win us over to his silly idea. "This is just like your pit closures scheme," I told him. "You will never be prime minister. You make far too many mistakes." "Since when has that stopped someone being prime minister?" he said, doing a Burmese hand-spring, which unfortunately knocked off my glasses.

Wednesday

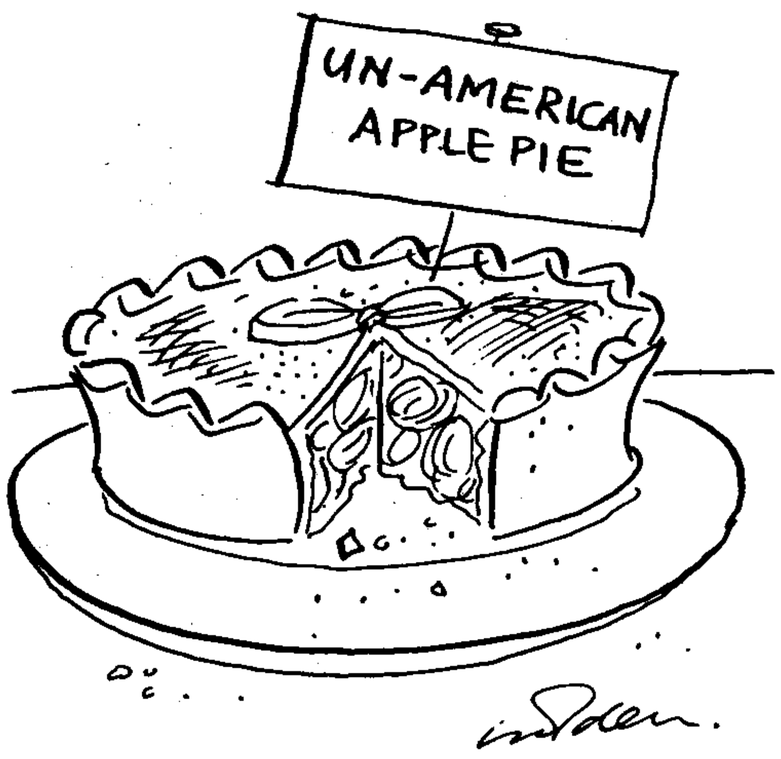
"Great news, prime minister," said my press man Mr Meyer, "the incompetence factor has been put behind us." He held up the morning's newspapers which showed pictures of my friend Mr Mellor looking very happy because he had been caught out with a blonde lady who was not his wife, but who I still thought looked very nice. "I'm afraid it's back to sleaze," he said. "This is terrible," I replied. "He will have to resign immediately." "But he already has," said Mr Meyer. "So he has," I remembered. What a relief! This means that the government is not affected by this story at all. I explained this to my wife Norman when we were relaxing in front of her new favourite programme University Challenge, with that very rude man from Newsnight.



"Surely if your best friend is caught at it twice in a row, then don't you look a bit silly?" she asked. I could not think of an answer to this, so she said: "I will offer it to the other side for a bonus." This was a very silly remark, as I cannot imagine Mr Blair answering it either.

Thursday

Talking of Mr Blair, which I never do, I cannot help noticing that the only reason why he has a lead of 50 per cent over me in the polls is that he never says or does anything memorable. As I told Mr Meyer: "Perhaps this is the secret of success. If I become just a grey nonentity who never says anything, do you think people would vote for me?" For some reason he ran out of the room laughing uncontrollably. He must have been laughing at poor old Mr Blair.



Friday

There is very exciting news from America. The Republicans, who are like the Conservatives, have won their biggest victory for 50 years. "This means that there is a great swing back to the right," I told Norman, as we were eating our microwaved McFayed's Porridge Oats. "It must be a good omen for our party to win the next election." "No," she said, "all it means is that the Americans are fed up with being run by a hopeless idiot, who hasn't got a clue."

Saturday

Mr Meyer came in with some more good news. "It's not the sleaze factor OR the incompetence factor any more," he said. "It's sleaze and incompetence both together this time."

He then showed me two important legal documents with lots of Latin written on them. This is a subject I did not get an 'O'-level in, unlike Mr Hurd and Mr Howard who are actually IN the reports, which just shows how much a so-called good education does for you! Oh yes! Anyway, according to the Court of Appeal, Mr Howard has broken the law about compensation to people who have been mugged in order to save money. And Mr Hurd has broken the law by giving money to rich foreign businessmen instead of helping the poor. I do not understand what they have done wrong, but obviously I had no idea what either of them were doing when they were doing whatever it was that was wrong.

Mr Hurd phoned me to say he had been thinking of resigning but that he felt he had a duty to the country to stay on.

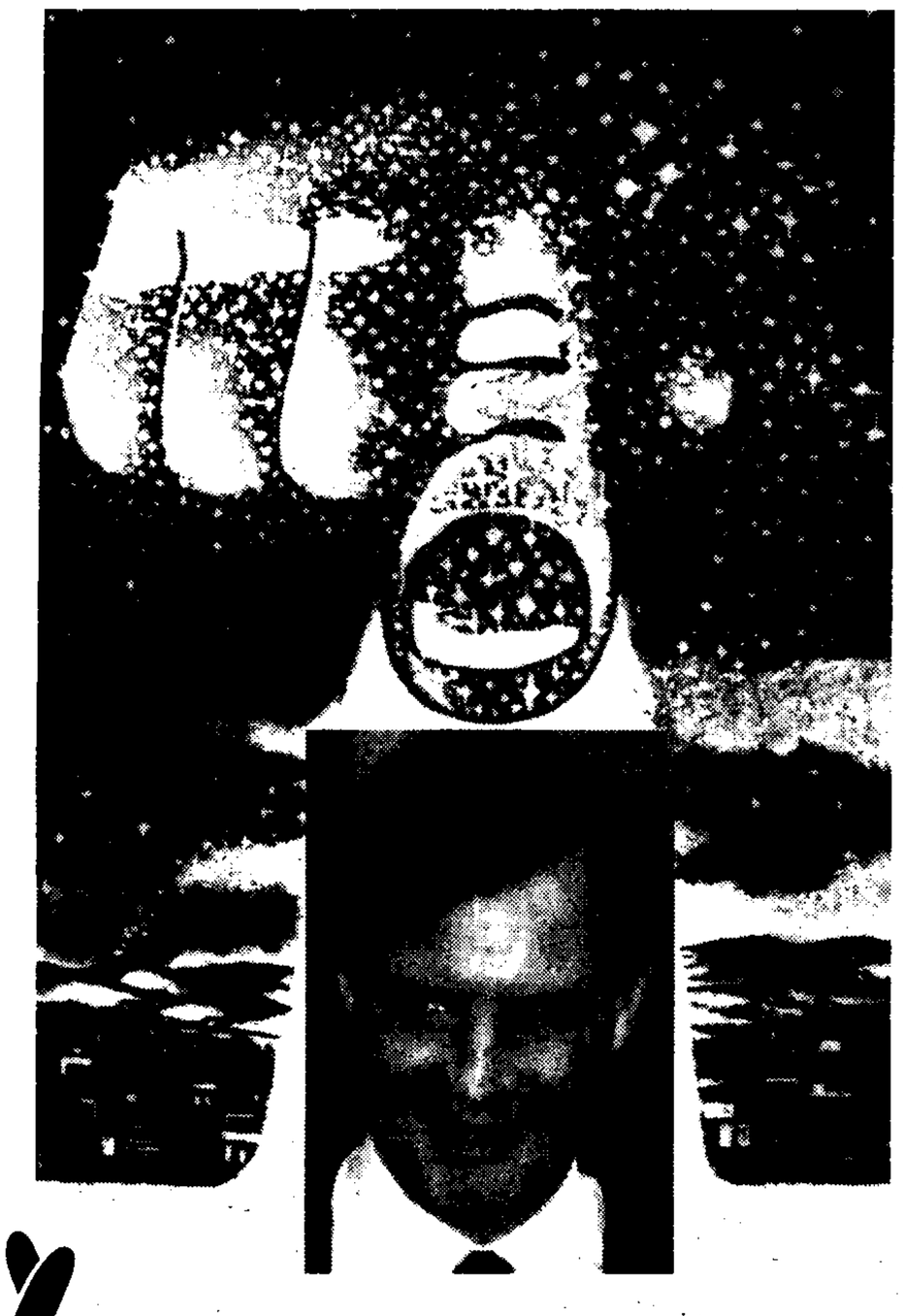
"Why?" I said in my new stern anti-sleaze-and-incompetence voice.

"In case I am needed in an emergency when someone else is forced out of Number Ten by a right-wing rebellion over Europe and the party needs a safe pair of hands."

"Thank you," I told him. "I appreciate your loyalty."

Mr Howard did not phone at all, which shows that he is too busy being loyal to me to phone up and tell me he is not going to resign either.

IT COULD BE YOU.



THE NATIONAL LO-TORY™

All you have to do is get the right numbers of votes in the election and — hey presto! — you're well on the way to becoming a millionaire.

Just look at these fabulous prizes that could be won if you're a Tory MP:

- **£500,000 directorship of recently privatised amenity!**
- **£300,000 in consultancy fees.**
- **Luxury weekends in Five Star Parisian splendour!**
- **Toe-jobs by unemployed actresses** *(shurely 'wealthy viscountesses'? Ed)*.
- **Holidays in Majorca with charming PLO hostesses.**
- **And much, much more!**

Said one lucky winner, a Mr Smith (who wanted no publicity but got plenty and then got sacked): "All I had to do was ask a simple question about Harrods and — bingo! — I had wads of cash stuffed into my pocket!"

Getting rich has never been so sleazy! *(Shurely 'easy'? Ed.)*

The Sunday Glamis

MY HUSBAND WAS A BULLY, A LIAR AND A TYRANT

Mrs Maxbeth's Shock Claim

by Our Media Staff **Roy Turning-The-Red-Seas-Greenslade**

THE WIDOW of the late Maxbeth, known as Robert the Brute, has described her husband as "the most evil man I have ever been married to".

In her newly published book, *Mine's a Big Max*, Lady Maxbeth reveals that she and her sons were terrified of the larger-than-life King of Scotland, whom she married when he was just a mere Thane.

Murdoch Most Foul

"His ambition", she said, "was all-consuming. His personality was so overpowering that none of us dared disobey him. One night he came in and said he had seen these three witches who told him his horoscope. They said he would be the world's most powerful man. He was obviously mad."

Laughing all the way to the Banquo

Mrs Maxbeth continued: "However, I thought that it was better to go along with him. But it was not easy. I went through hell and could not sleep at all. I began to hallucinate and suffer from somnambulism. Eventually it got so bad, I had to write a book to give my side of the story."

Lady Maxbeth is innocent and so are her sons.

● *Read more in Tomorrow, Tomorrow and Tomorrow's paper!*

A Doctor writes

As a doctor I am often asked: "Why are you looking after the patients?"

What happens is a man in a suit comes in with a clipboard and says he is the Trust Deputy Assistant Controller of Finances.

He then tells me that as a doctor I should be filling in Form 7b/273iii(a) instead of hanging about on the wards wasting time with sick people, many of whom are probably going to die anyway. "Your job is to save money not lives," he says.

This syndrome he declares is called Priority Failure or *Hippocratus oathus normalis*, to give it its correct medical name, and can only be cured by the removal of the doctor from the customer interface, leaving healthcare to the professionals, ie the accountants.

If you are worried about your doctor not seeing you in hospital you may have a point.

© A Former Doctor

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SOCCER

NEASDEN KEEPER IN 'BRIBE' SHOCK

'He saved goal' charge

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man In The Hotel Suite With The Used Notes And The Plain Brown Envelope

THE WORLD of soccer was rocked to its foundations last night when it was revealed that veteran net-minder Wally Foot had accepted an illegal payment to alter the result of an important match in the North Circular Relegation League last season.

Foot is accused by the *Neasden Argus & Car Mart Free Sheet* (delivered free every Friday) of wilfully attempting to make a save which would entirely change of the outcome of the fixture.

Robbing The Bruce

The money, a sum of £15, is alleged to have been paid to the legendary "One-Legged Custodian of the Net" by an unnamed Asian businessman (Mr Monty Gerhardie, long-time proprietor of Patel's Mags, Fags 'n' Videos emporium in the heart of Neasden's celebrated commercial artery, the Tesco Road).

But last night Mr Foot denied the allegations. He told reporters: "They haven't got a leg to stand on. Unlike me."

When confronted with 27 hours of video evidence, an ashen-faced Ron Knee, manager of Foot's club Neasden FC, issued the following statement: "I am standing by my man — as indeed is Inspector Knacker, who is going to put him away for a long time."

LATE SCORE

Ford Open Prison	0
A.C. Grobbelaard	1

(W. Foot [o.g.])

THE MELLOR FAMILY TREE No. 28

1536

"My wife has remained loyal to me throughout this matter"

Lives Of The Saints

No. 94: Saint Christopher of Hitchens

FEW PEOPLE had heard of this obscure saint who for many years lived the life of a recluse in America. Only occasionally could he be seen emerging from his anchorite's cell on Lower 58th Street to appear as the "token left-winger" on chat shows in return for large sums of money.

But then came the miraculous event which was to make St Christopher famous for at least a day. He was sitting in a bar when he was approached by an Eastern holy man, the Blessed Tariq of Bandung. The guru said to him: "Arise, Christopher, you have holy work to do this day. You have been chosen by Channel Four to go out into the world and expose a false prophetess, who has millions under her thrall. If you do this, you will win the thanks of mankind and a more than earthly reward — viz. you will be the centre of a great controversy for at least ten minutes."

All Is Vanity Fair

And St Christopher beseeched him, saying: "How can I do this, when I am only an humble hack, unworthy of this great task you are calling me to? What's the money like?"

And Tariq said: "It is good. And we will give unto you a researcher, who will do all the hard work." And the Western saint said "It's a deal."

And so it was that, shortly afterwards, St Christopher was able to expose to the world the most evil woman who had ever lived — Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

St Christopher revealed to an astonished world that this infamous old woman was nothing less than a Roman Catholic nun who believed in God.

*NEXT WEEK: **Stalin Reassessed**. Was the hated Russian dictator really St Alin of Georgia, who only killed millions of people for their own good?*

Peter *McLie*

The World's Worst Columnist

BILL CLINTON is on the crest of a wave, is he not? It seems hard to believe that this is the same man who only a few weeks ago was under fire over the so-called Sleazegate affair, involving a woman called Jennifer Al-Fayed! Americans are a queer folk, as I discovered when I lived in Australia.

Mark my words, these mid-term elections will see young Bill Clinton romp home, to the dismay of Edward Kennedy and the Republicans!

☐ *I HAVE never heard of Mr Bert Grobbelaar and I never will.*

I MAKE it a rule never to write about people of whom I have never heard. But I make an exception in the case of Prince Charles. It may be that he was the human beast who recently beat up the beautiful *EastEnders* star Gillian Taylforth. I do not know. Who can tell? All I can say for sure is that it is a funny old world.

I CANNOT help noticing how many people are sporting a poppy in their buttonholes these days. What a strange choice of flower to choose! Is it a sign of Freemasonry? Or are all the wearers members of the so-called Gay Community? Surely not, because even my friend Andrew Wilson is wearing one.

I have a better idea. Why don't we all wear poppies on a certain day in memory of those who fought and died in the Great War? And we could call that day "Fireworks Day". *(You're fired. Ed.)*

A Dentist writes

AS a dentist I am often asked "Aaar ungh gaarg guug?" When I remove my instruments from their mouths, patients then often say: "What on earth are you doing moon-lighting as an MP when you should be concentrating on your real job as a dentist?"

The answer is very simple. The dentist is suffering from Advanced Story Decay or *Guardiensis sleazitis terminitis*, as it is known to journalists.

What happens is that the Guardian runs a very sound scoop about sleaze, but then gradually the story gets worn down by repetition until the newspaper needs a completely new story to "cap" it.

Unfortunately this operation is rather risky as the replacement story can often look somewhat tacky and unconvincing and get on everyone's nerves.

If your story is rotten, contact Peter Preston and he'll put it in.

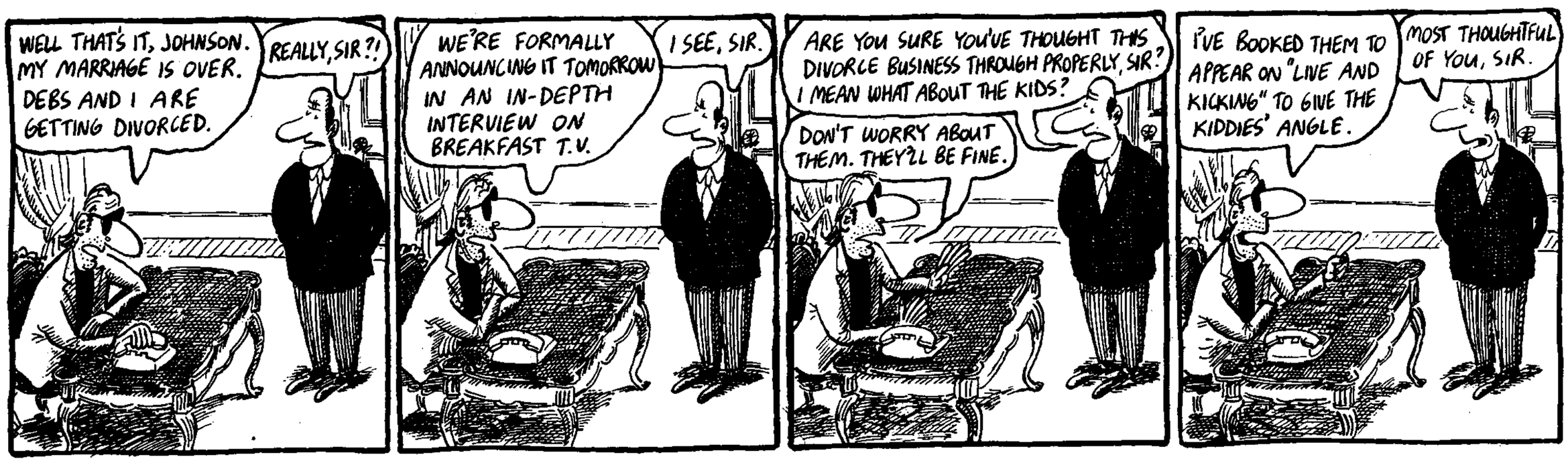
© A. Dentist

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said: "If evidence is presented to us that officers were involved in alleged acts of decency, the matter will be investigated."

Sun

Great Bores Of Today.

"... when you think about it it's impossible how can the goalkeeper just fix it on his own? I mean OK he can let goals in but what if the strikers can't score them? if their central defenders mop it up in the attack which they often do after all Liverpool were the supreme masters outside the box then there might have been no shots to save let alone let in and if he did let them in *when* should he do it anyway? all in the first half? and then the others may score more or should he leave it to the last minute when it could be too late? and then how can he prevent his own forwards netting at the other end? doesn't make sense unless the other goalkeepers are in on it *or* all 22 players are in on it *or* the referee because he could give a penalty at any time couldn't he? *or* the linesman who could rule the goal offside whenever it suited him it's not like boxing which is obviously fixed that Foreman fight was ridiculous and did you see that Grand Prix at the weekend? clearly rigged no I mean they're all at it these days and football's no exception I mean that Grobbelaar does he think we're stupid? ..."


WELL THAT'S IT, JOHNSON. MY MARRIAGE IS OVER. DEBS AND I ARE GETTING DIVORCED.
REALLY, SIR?!
WE'RE FORMALLY ANNOUNCING IT TOMORROW IN AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW ON BREAKFAST T.V.
I SEE, SIR.
ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE THOUGHT THIS DIVORCE BUSINESS THROUGH PROPERLY, SIR? I MEAN WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM. THEY'LL BE FINE.
I'VE BOOKED THEM TO APPEAR ON "LIVE AND KICKING" TO GIVE THE KIDDIES' ANGLE.
MOST THOUGHTFUL OF YOU, SIR.

PETERBOROUGH

by Quentin Tarantino

Mr Travolta and friend share a joke

Marquess Shooting Party

I RUN into an old friend, the Marquess of Cholmondeley, at the Garrick Club. The Marquess is in fine form, regaling me with tales from his days in the Guards. I listen with amusement and then blow him away.

Grave Concern

TO LADY Sabrina Gosforth's delightful estate in Gloucestershire, accompanied in the boot of my car by the late Marquess of Cholmondeley. I take the opportunity to bury him in a shallow grave where I am unexpectedly joined by the delightful Lady Sabrina and her guard dogs. She asks me what on earth I am up to. Alas, I have to blow her away too. And the dogs as well!

Pulp Fiction

A PARTY at Grosvenor House to celebrate the launch of Pippa Darlington's new biography of her aunt Lady Edith Tregunter, published by HarperCollins.

I meet Pippa, who asks why I am covered in blood and carrying a sawn-off shotgun. To her polite enquiry, I jovially riposte: "Don't fucking fuck with me, you fucking fuck."

I make my excuses and leave her bleeding to death on the carpet.

Home Sweet Home

I RECEIVE a call at home from the police, who surround the house and ask me if I would be interested in throwing down my weapons and joining them at the station to assist with their enquiries. Instead I turn on the flamethrower and torch them all alive. What japes!

Cutting

☐ *From the Wivelsfield Examiner, a reader has kindly sent me this cutting: Man fries wife, cuts off ears and jumps in acid bath!!!*

Quentin Letts is on holiday

"We don't say that Ronnie is too thick to go to college, we say that he's University Challenged..."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Sir Herbert Gussett

SIR—I am sure that many of your readers will have shared my sense of outrage at the latest edict from Mrs Bottomley about what we should be allowed to eat in the privacy of our own homes, eg, the so-called "Department of Health Recommended Breakfast Intake of 0.65 slices of wholemeal toast, 0.16 millilitres of fresh fruit juice," etc.

I would like to make it clear that we did not fight two World Wars and chuck the Argies out of the Falkland Islands just so that we can be ordered around in this fashion by Nanny State in the person of Mrs Bottomley, no doubt on the instigation of Monsieur Delors, whose own breakfast presumably consists of a plateful of frogs legs, garlic and snails.

Let me append, for the benefit of your readers, the Gussett Best of British Breakfast Menu, which has served me and my good friend and neighbour Col. Buffy Frobisher well through thick and thin:

2.7 litres Auld McTaggart's Finest Double-Malt Whisky.

0.003 millilitres tap water.

1 Bag Finest Salted Peanuts.

This should last any true Englishman through the morning, when he can repeat the same nourishing diet by way of luncheon, tea, dinner and bedtime snack. I hope this will put an end once and for all to this despotic campaign to turn our once-proud nation into a rabble of vegetarians and milksops.

Your obedient servant,
SIR H. GUSSETT
Duneatin
c/o The Lamb and Flag
Terry St Venables
Dorset

ON OTHER PAGES
New sighting of Caithness Monster p 7

MELLOR ACCUSATIONS GROW

by Our Media Staff
Peter Presscouncil

THE MAN at the centre of the latest row over the behaviour of the press has hit back at what he called "a vindictive campaign by a sleaze merchant".

A clearly upset Mr Rupert Murdoch attacked his tormentor, David Mellor, whom he accused of running a "vicious personal campaign" against him in "all his newspaper and media outlets".

Mass Murdoch

Said Murdoch: "No one man should have this much power. His influence extends from the *Guardian* to the *Today* programme, to Radio Five Alive, to GMTV with Penny and Eamonn, to the *Evening Standard*, to Classic-FM, to Radio Sevenoaks FM *Drive Time with Mike Spam*, to Hospital Radio Derby's *Eazee-Listenin' Hour* with Gordon Kennedy *(who he? Ed)*.

"I can't escape him," sobbed Mr Murdoch. "My wife and I can't turn on the TV, open a paper or listen to the radio without seeing David Mellor attacking us. I can't go on. The press has got to be regulated. It's time for a Privacy Law. Help!"

Mr David Mellor is a humbug.

NEW LUCAN THEORY SHOCKS NATION

by Our Lucanology Staff
Sir Ludicrous Kennedy

IN A television documentary to be shown tonight, leading criminologists will present a radical new explanation for the mystery of the murder of Lord Lucan's nanny exactly 20 years ago.

The claim that will amaze viewers is that the killer was none other than Lord Lucan.

"I know it sounds ridiculous," says the programme's producer. "but in the course of our investigations it became increasingly obvious that he did it."

There were apparently five key points that led the investigators to their stunning conclusion.

- **He did it.**
- **He ran away after he did it.**
- **He never came back after he did it.**
- **No one else did it.**
- **He did it.**

There is, however, one remaining mystery which the new programme fails to explain:

- **Why are there hundreds of programmes on the television about an unpleasant upper-class murderer who clearly did it twenty years ago?**

LATE NEWS

LUCAN WHEREABOUTS REVEALED

LORD LUCAN is now believed to be hiding in "the one place no one would ever see him" — BBC2's *The Late Show*.

Lucan, it is claimed, is presenting items about German Cheese Sculpture and Japanese Country 'n' Western bands at about 11.45pm or thereabouts.

He has probably shaved off his moustache, died his hair red and adopted a flat monotone to disguise himself as Tracy McLeod. *(That's enough Lucan — Ed.)*

Song of the Sea

Ro-ro-ro the boat
Quickly under water.
Ferrily, ferrily, ferrily, ferrily,
The firm gets off manslaughter.

(Traditional)

TV Highlights

Monday 9.00 pm

'Knacker'

GRIPPING police drama in which top police psychologist Inspector Knacker *(played by Christopher Biggins)* compiles psychological profiles of murder suspects.

Knacker, or, as he is known to colleagues, "Fitzup", has an incredible 100 per cent record. 100 per cent wrong.

His personal life is admirable, but professionally Knacker is a washout.

In this episode, called 'Wimbledon', Knacker calls in WPC Penpal to help lure the killer into a confession. Will the case collapse when the judge throws it out on the grounds of entrapment?

Yes.

New Films

Huffington Gump *(PG)*

NOW packing them in all over the Western world, this is the touching, hilarious, yet ultimately pointless tale of Huffington Gump, a simpleton millionaire, and Arianna, the girl who loved him. Only Huffington Gump could spend £25 million because his wife told him to. Watch him as he runs for the US Senate — and falls flat on his face! Listen as he expounds his simple, home-spun philosophy on prime-time TV. "Gee, you'd better ask mah wife what I think about that, sir." Thrill to the sight of the lovely Ari as she denies that she is controlled by aliens.

You will laugh, you will cry, but you won't vote for him!

(NBG)

Now showing nowhere!

NEW WORDS

by Philip Howard

GROBBELAAR
n. (slang) under-counter payment, backhander, often given in brown envelope. Example: "I'll meet you in the hotel room and bung you a nice little grobbelaar." (*Martin Chuzzlewit*)

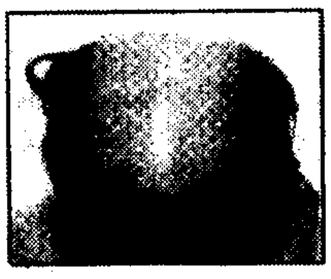
PRESTON
n. man who occupies senior job for many years for no apparent reason. Example: "That Trelford was a bit of a preston." (*UK Preston Gazette*, **1991**)

RUMBOLD
v. intrans. to be caught out taking grobbelaars in the political arena. Example: "Damn, I've been rumbold. But I won't resign until I have to." (*Hansard*)

BLAIR
v. hot-air device for filling balloons. Example: "Turn up the blair, old man, or we'll end up crashing into that field full of pigs." (*The Archers*, **1994**)

AL SALAM HOSPITAL

Before Hair Transplant



After Hair Transplant

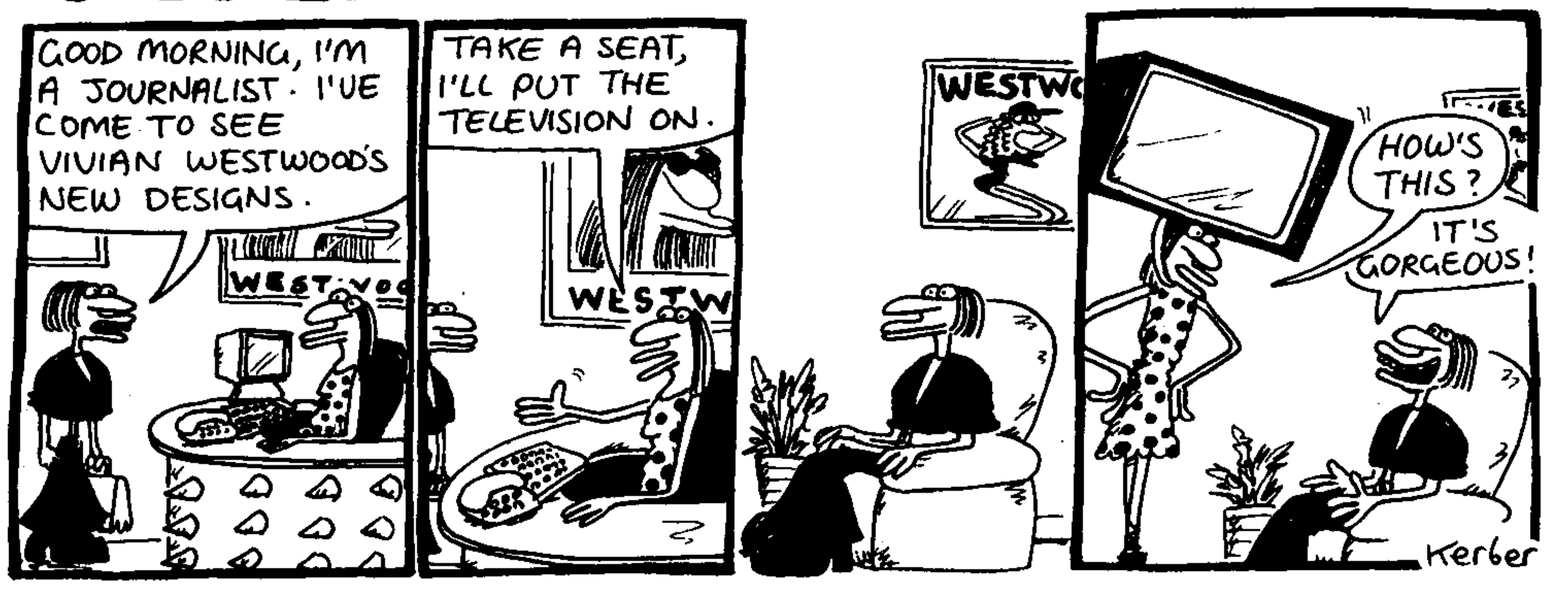
Advertisement, Arab Times

THE SUN: Princess Diana is learning to kick-box and is having lessons from a marital arts expert.

Hull Daily Mail

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber


GOOD MORNING, I'M A JOURNALIST. I'VE COME TO SEE VIVIAN WESTWOOD'S NEW DESIGNS.
TAKE A SEAT, I'LL PUT THE TELEVISION ON.
HOW'S THIS?
IT'S GORGEOUS!
Kerber

Lady Cobhamley's Lover

—— (adapted for TV by Barbara Mills and Pat Boon) ——

(Scene of stately home in Midlands, Ragley Hall. Cut to library where aged peer in tweeds is reading Daily Telegraph to large dog)

Lord Cobhamley *(for it is he):* I say, Towser, I don't get the point of this joke by Garland. Can you explain it to me?

(Enter butler with double whisky on server)

Butler: Will that be all, sir?

Lord C: I say, Wheatcroft, have you seen Her Ladyship?

Butler: She's gone to one of her Heritage meetings, My Lord. She said not to wait up for her.

Lord C: That's a relief. I'm glad the little woman has found an outside interest at last.

Butler: You can say that again, My Lord. *(Winks at dog)*

(Lord C falls asleep over article by Simon Heffer on privatisation of the post office. Cut to wooded glade on Lord C's estate. Lady C, looking blonde and randy, wanders provocatively into glade to find toothy, virile, working-class ex-Cabinet Minister hacking away at his latest Guardian piece about funding for provincial opera houses)

Lady C: Ah, Mellors, how are you getting on with that piece?

Mellors *(laughing rudely):* Oh, I've finished with her and her toe-sookin'. Now, 'appen, I'm ready for a bit of upper-class tottie like thysen'.

Lady C: Ooo, you are awful.

(Takes off clothes)

Mellors *(gazing at her naked form):* Aye, 'appen, as an 'eritage expert I can tell thee tha's got a grade one well-preserved frontage on thee, and no mistakin'. Thee and I is going to be an item, I warrant thee.

Lady C: What sort of item?

(Several hacks from News of the World leap out of bushes)

First hack: An item on next Sunday's front page, that's what you'll be!

(Excited journalists rush off with scoop. Cut back to library at Ragley Hall. Lord C is reading Telegraph to heads of various dead deer on walls. Enter Lady C, looking dishevelled but happy)

Lord C: I say, darling, I see you're in the papers with that frightful little fellow Mellors. Never liked the cut of his jib, wandering around the estate with his trousers down. Talk at the club was that he was mixed up with some Arab bint. What does it mean?

Lady C *(bursting into tears):* It means that David and I have forged a bond.

Lord C: What? Forgery? Bonds? This sounds suspiciously like my friend Lord Archole.

(Mellors enters through french windows, pursued by pack of wild journalists)

Mellors: Nay, the bond of true love, Your Lordship. Thy wife and I have come to know each other, in the fullest, deepest, blood-sense of the word. We 'ave enjoyed the deepest, fullest mystical Communion that only a man and a woman can knowst. Obviously my first concern is my family and my constituents, who have incidentally given me their full support.

Lady C: As has my husband — haven't you, darling?

Lord C: Whatever you say, my dear. *(Resumes studying Telegraph 'Quick Crossword')* I say, before you go, you wouldn't happen to know a four-letter word beginning with 'F' meaning 'To have full, deep, blood-communion with someone else's wife', would you?

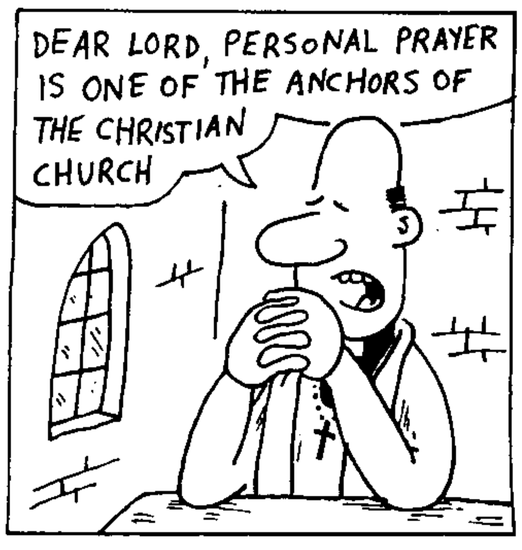
Mellors: Fook. Off.

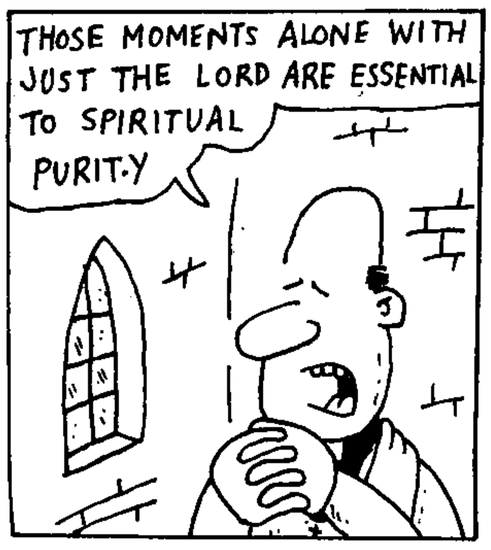
© *D.H. Lawrence, 1994.*

CAST IN FULL

Lord C	LESLIE PHILLIPS
Lady C	MARIELLA FROSTRUP
Mellor	ROBBIE COLTRANE
Butler	STEPHEN FRY
First hack	SIR DAVID FROSTRUP

Directed by Ken Russell Twisk





Ms Taylforth sued over a claim that she and Knights performed oral sex in their Range Rover on an A1 slip road.

Knights said recently: "Our relationship is as strong as ever although the strain on Gill has been terrible.

"The girl is on her knees at the moment. The legal bill is a terrible burden but we are sharing it together."

Daily Express

Literary Review

Lib-Flab pact

The Guardian Year '94
(Fourth Estate, £12.99)

"NEVER work for a Liberal, dear boy," Malcolm Muggeridge's father is supposed to have advised, à propos his own time on the *Manchester Guardian*, as it then was. "They always give you the sack just before Christmas."

Ten years ago, in the wake of the source-busting Sarah Tisdall case, you could revise this formula to read: "Never work for a Liberal, they'll blow your cover and send you to jail." The 1994 version, suggested by this year's handsome *Guardian* anthology, might be: "Never work for a Liberal, because Liberalism has ceased to exist."

The Guardian, of course, hasn't a clue which route to take through the tangled political jungle of the mid-90s. Nervous editorials on the end of radicalism run side by side with unreconstituted Trots still braying on about the socialist dawn.

The old certainties about public responsibilities and private duties (with a bias to the former) have been elbowed aside by the sneaking realisation that what the sober, incorruptible electorate really wants is cars, cookers and tax cuts.

The awareness of this betrayal and a desperate nostalgia for those elysian public sector 70s go hand in hand, reflected in the kind of thing that gets written in the *Guardian* — half looking forward and half looking back, half "Whither the TUC?" and half "Whither Elizabeth Hurley?" — and also (ominously) in the people who write for it: public sleazeballs; timeworn oldsters; and odd madwomen whom no one else will have. This is not sparky eclecticism, this is a mess.

Here and there traces of that old, scrupulous, slightly dotty but fairminded liberal organ survive. Nick Davies's articles on the tragedies of the underclass are excellent, as are the foreign reports and the sport (notably Matthew Engel). However, awakening readers' interest is always liable to be

slapped down by — say — a ghastly piece of junkie preening on the subject of William Burroughs by Will Self.

There is also a salient omission — hardly anything from that quint-essential repository of liberal sentiment, the letters page, a natural home for every pen-happy bore from Nicholas Walter of the Rationalist Press Association and Gary Slapper of the Nottingham Law School to Keith Flett of London N17. Why is this? Could it be, in a typical *Guardian* paradox, that the section of the paper most beloved by the traditional readers is the one most loathed by the new writers?

Books & Bookmen

■ IMAGINE the embarrassment of 200 ladies of letters, congregated at the Cafe Royal for the centenary lunch of the Society of Women Writers and Journalists, when speaker Edwina Currie decides that, instead of the anticipated tribute to a hundred years of feminine literary achievement, she will deliver a cringemaking sales patter for her "novel" *A Parliamentary Affair*.

"I didn't get to be a celebrity by accident," La Currie proclaims (unnecessarily). "My publisher didn't see a word of my novel before he bought it," she insists (quite believably). "I'm only an amateur writer. I didn't know what I was doing at all!" At which candid admission, the assembled guests give a round of confirmatory applause.

Continuing unabashed, Currie confides that her book is having to be "cleaned up" prior to TV serialisation. "There's too much sex in it, they think. But what women between 25 and 50 really want is a bit

of rumpy-pumpy. And," she shrieks excitedly, "I wanted to see Sean Bean's bottom!"

At this even Lord Longford, the man who found Myra Hindley's company tolerable, could stand no more. The ageing Earl rose grandly from the top table and left!

☐ *SHOULD this latest short story going round the publishing industry be classed as fiction or non-fiction?*

"Let's get Amis from Random House," said HarperCollins executive chairman Eddie "McBastard" Bell at a meeting to discuss which famous authors the mighty Hammersmith conglomerate might next poach. "McBastard's" sidekick David Young volunteered for the task.

A few weeks later a triumphant Young confirmed to "McBastard" that he'd inveigled Sir Kingsley away from Random House, a snitch at £300,000 for two books. "Kingsley?" exploded Eddie. "You blithering idiot. It was Martin I was thinking of."

Young and Old Amis are both published by Random House imprints: Kingers by Hutchinson; Martin by Cape.

■ *POOR Christopher MacLehose still hasn't achieved the buyout of his beloved Harvill from "McBastard" although it is obviously going to happen as, for the first time in years, Harvill is not mentioned nor its new titles listed in the new HarperCollins seasonal list, for the first six months of 1995.*

MacLehose was counting on the support of his two biggest selling authors, George MacDonald "Flashman" Fraser and Gerald Seymour. Sadly "Flashman", whose books have always been published by MacLehose, feels he is too old to make a move. Seymour, whose recent books have been published by MacLehose on the HarpicCollins list, has made a move — but to Clare Alexander at Viking Penguin, not to MacLehose's breakaway Harvill. "The Queen" burst into tears at a recent party when lectured by MacLehose about how disgracefully she'd behaved in poaching his author.

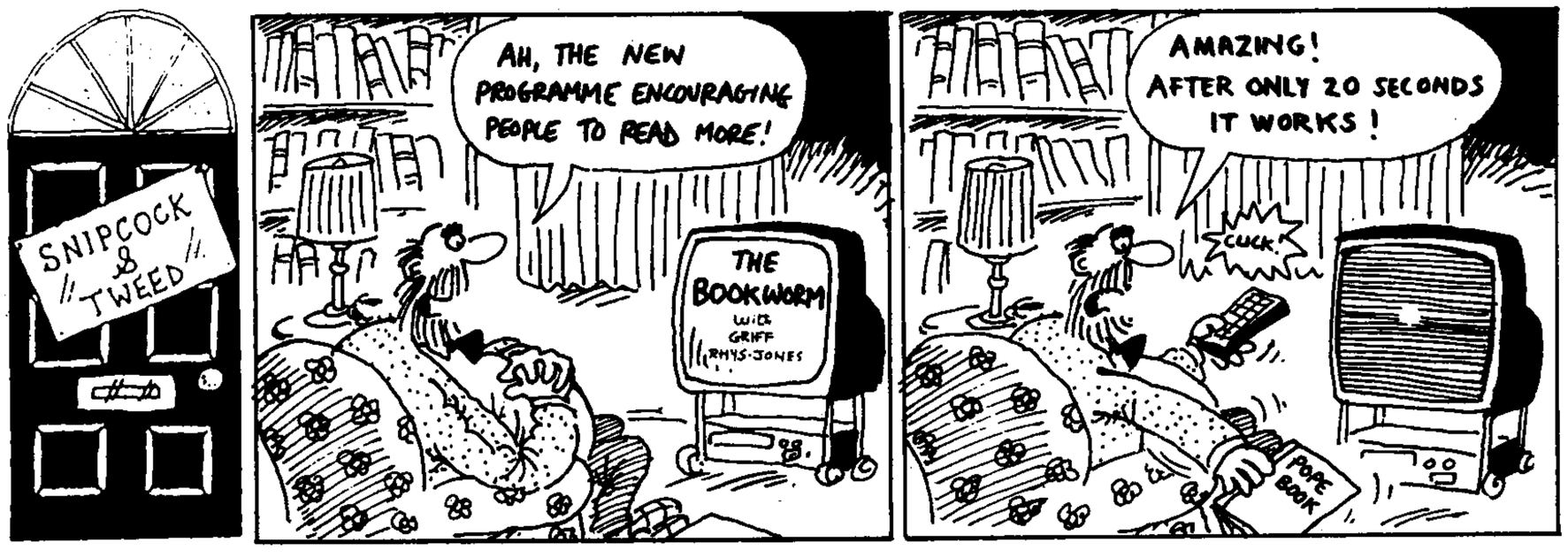
☐ IS THE net book agreement in danger of making a comeback? Tim Hely Hutchinson of Hodder-Headline, whose books will all be de netted on boxing day (bad luck if you buy your Christmas presents before, er, Christmas), and Richard Charkin, mandarin of Reed, whose books are already sold non-net, are a bit surprised that no other major publisher has leapt in and begun slashing prices.

A clearly rattled Charkin writes in the new issue of *Reed Publishing News*: "My guess is that the NBA will now atrophy as a result of deliberate sabotage by some of our competitors... we have always been honest about our position." What irony.

■ **PUBLISHERS, rather quaintly, like to boast how much they have agreed to pay authors to sign up their latest books. They are less keen to noise abroad, months or even years later, by how much their magnanimous advances have remained unearned, and how much money they have lost on the books.**

Bookworm will give bottles of pissable claret for copies from moles of audited royalty statements indicating which titles published in the last year have taken a bath to the tune of £50,000 or more. We could start with Jim Grace's aptly titled *Signals of Distress* (Viking); Naomi Campbell's *Swan* (Reed); Rob Newman's *Dependence Day* (Century); or even Lord Howzat's *Conflict of Loyalty* (Macmillan).

'Bookworm'



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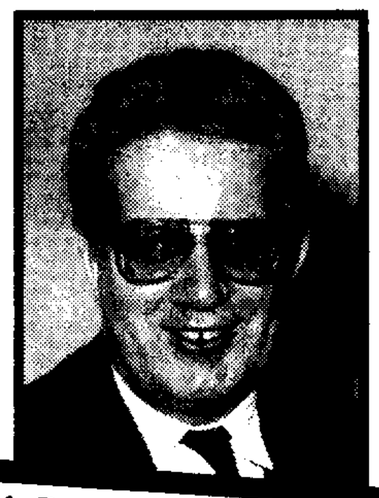
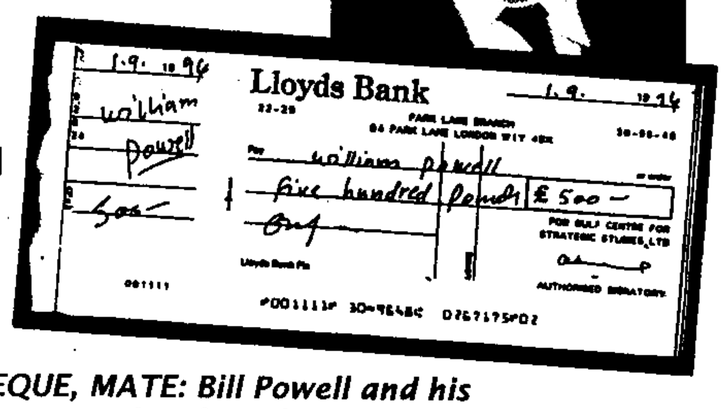
WE KNOCK POWELL





CHEQUE, MATE: Bill Powell and his not so occasional readies

WILLIAM POWELL, Tory MP for Corby, had a rotten day when the last *Eye* came out revealing the regular monthly payments he receives from the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies.

The *Daily Mail* was the first to ask him why he didn't declare any payments from the GCSS in the MPs' register of interests, especially since his colleague Tony Marlow, who earns less than half as much, declares an "occasional consultancy" with the GCSS.

Mr Powell, who refused to answer any questions from the *Eye* about these payments, had a ready answer for the ever-friendly lobby hacks. He does declare the payments, he said, under the rather vague heading "occasional income from journalism". He explained that he writes articles for the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies for which he is paid, and his register entry covers that. This answer was quite enough to satisfy the hacks, who didn't publish a word.

The problem is that Mr Powell's income from the Gulf Centre is not occasional at all. It is regular — indeed, until recently it was £750 a month. Now it is £500 a month (see the latest cheque to come to the *Eye*, for September). The Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies publishes a monthly *Gulf Report*, whose readers cannot remember any recent signed articles from Mr Powell.

The director of the GCSS, Dr Omar Al-Hassan, phoned the *Eye* with his opinion that the article in our last issue was "disgusting".

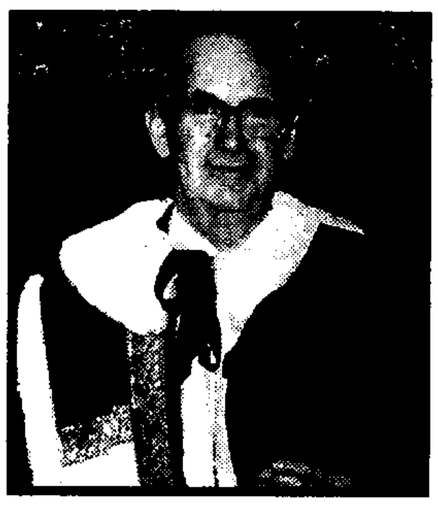
What was wrong, he complained, with paying for meals in the House of Commons? In the old days, he explained, MPs would be asked out to lunch and dinner, but nowadays they found it more convenient to be entertained in their own private dining rooms. "They are so busy, you see," said the director. "You undermine the leadership of this country — the MPs."

Dr Omar Al-Hassan said Mr Powell "wrote a lot of articles for us about the Middle East". When asked which issues the articles appeared in, and if he would send the *Eye* copies of them, he reverted to the same old formula: "ask Mr Powell".

Eye inquiries in the Commons indicate that Mr Powell's "occasional income for journalism" entry in no way covers the payments he gets from the GCSS. The point about registering outside interests is that MPs' financial connections with companies and governments — in this case Kuwait and Saudi Arabia — should be openly declared. This is specially important if those interests overlap with the MPs' political interests, as they do for Mr Powell. He is secretary of the Conservative Party's Middle East Council and is forever sounding off about the Gulf on related subjects. The fact that he is paid £500 a month by an organisation financed by the emir of Kuwait and the Saudi royal family is obviously relevant. But no one knows it — unless they read the *Eye*.

Saint George

■ NO APPOINTMENT to the Nolan commission on standards in public life was more inspired than that of Lord Thomson of Monifieth. He has been given special responsibility to report on the relationship between ministers, civil servants and big private companies.



Lord Thomson's experience in this field is prodigious. He was in the Labour cabinet from 1967 to 1970; and during the 1970s and 1980s he put together a useful bunch of directorships including ICI, the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Woolwich, Group Four and Grant Leisure.

His experience as Commonwealth secretary in 1967 and 1968 will be specially valuable to him. During that time, a ticklish problem for the Labour government was Rhodesia and its illegal racialist government. The Labour government punished the regime with economic sanctions, crucial to the success of which was an oil boycott. In 1967, when he took over as Commonwealth secretary responsible for Rhodesia, Thomson was quite clear that the British oil companies were playing their part. In June 1967 he wrote to a Labour backbencher, Ben Whitaker: "We are absolutely satisfied that British oil companies are not involved in the supply."

Whoops! In January 1968, Thomson found out that the oil companies had been telling fibs. Contrary to their assurances, millions of barrels of their oil were pouring into Rhodesia via subsidiaries in South Africa and Mozambique.

This revelation led to a furious outburst by the president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, who accused the British government and the oil companies of hypocrisy. A panic meeting was called in George Thomson's office on 21 February 1968. It was attended by the chairmen of Shell and BP and top civil servants from the foreign and commonwealth offices.

At once everyone agreed that the main aim of the meeting was not to stop the sanctions-busting — but to cover it up. The ministers, the top civil servants and the two chairmen got down to the difficult business of devising an official answer to impertinent backbenchers' questions about British oil companies breaking British laws. The official record of the meeting disclosed: "In discussion it was agreed that in any statements in the House of Commons or elsewhere ministers would be stating the position with complete accuracy if they used a formula along the lines: `no British company is supplying oil to Rhodesia'. If asked whether oil consigned to the Transvaal by the British oil companies was being diverted to Rhodesia [which was happening all the time] ministers could truthfully say something along the following lines: 'We have of course looked into this possibility. We are satisfied that this is not happening'. Details should be avoided..."

Thomson was delighted. The formula was used relentlessly whenever a backbencher or rebel peer asked questions on the subject. In his 1979 book *Oilgate*, Martin Bailey wrote: "The record of Thomson's meeting of 21st February 1968 with Shell and BP provides a remarkably well-documented case of collusion between a government minister and private companies to formulate misleading answers to parliamentary questions."

Hooray, Hendry!

■ CHARLES HENDRY, the dashing new Tory MP for High Peak, has got his first leg-up: he is one of two new parliamentary private secretaries appointed to the department of social security.

There the young MP hopes to do selfless work for those less fortunate than himself who depend on the DSS for a living. Into the bargain he will also be able to give valuable advice to Andersen Consulting, the consultants responsible for the project to put all information about social security benefits on one computer system.

As the *Eye* revealed in September, this project has cost £2.6 billion: rather more than the £700 million first estimated. The project, officially known as Operational Strategy, has been nicknamed Operation Travesty, but the increase in cost has not made any difference to the enormous profits from the project drawn from the public purse by Andersen Consulting.

Charles Hendry is a paid consultant to Andersen Consulting.

Parliamentary Private Secretaries don't have to give up their business interests, so he can go on consulting with Andersen's from his new vantage point inside the department.

LINCOLN CONVERTIBLE

■ LONG and strident has been the campaign of Lincolnshire Tory councillor Mrs Betty Harvey OBE for a stricter attitude to law and order and for tougher punishments for those convicted.

She must have been shocked at the trivial sentence handed down to one local farmer and his wife when they were prosecuted by Mrs Harvey's own council for abandoning veterinary wastes — used syringes, dirty swabs and so on — in obvious breach of the control of pollution act.

Horncastle magistrates fined the couple a mere £500 each, and their company £1,000. I expect you've guessed that the farmer, a Mr Harvey, as it happens, is married to Mrs Betty Harvey OBE.

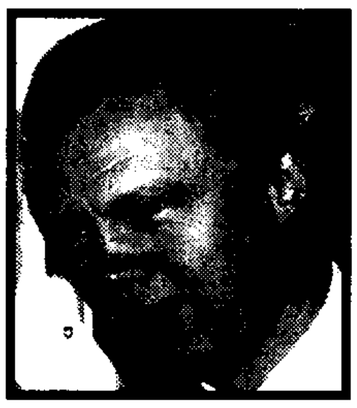
NUCLEAR BLIXKRIEG

THE lying and cheating about arms sales to Iraq goes on and on.

Ministers — from Margaret Thatcher downwards — fell over themselves to assure Lord Justice Scott at his inquiry that there was a complete embargo on the export of nuclear weaponry from Britain to Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

But the assurances have looked a little thin as reports have flooded in to the government from the international agencies which are inspecting Saddam's armoury. Mr David Davis, a former sugar king who is now a junior foreign office minister, admitted last month in a little publicised written answer to Labour MP Llew Smith:

"International Atomic Energy Agency and United Nations Special Commission inspectors have investigated a wide range of sites in Iraq known to have been part of, or connected to, the nuclear programme where British equipment has been found. It is not our practice to comment on information given to us in confidence by UNSCOM and the IAEA, nor to publish the names of companies which delivered goods to Iraq."



'SUGAR' DAVIS

HANS BLIX

Read that carefully and you might think the inspecting agencies insisted that the names of the firms they disclosed should not be published. That seems to be the thrust of Mr Davis's words "given to us in confidence". So it was rather bad luck for Davis that five days after his reply, Dr Hans Blix, director-general of the IAEA, which has inspected the Iraqi nuclear sites, should come to London to answer questions from the Commons foreign affairs select committee.

Dr Blix agreed that the names of firms which exported nuclear equipment to Iraq were handed by his agency to governments, not the public in general. But he revealed that several other countries *had* publicised the names of the exporting companies. Mike Gapes, Labour MP for Ilford South, asked him: "So, you give the information to the governments on the understanding that they do not publicise that information."

Dr Blix replied: "They can. No, I do not think there is an obstacle on our part to their giving publicity to enterprises, suppliers in their country."

So what Mr Davis really meant to say was: "We know the names of the British companies which broke the law by exporting nuclear equipment to Iraq. We've been told by the IAEA. They don't mind if we tell the people who elected us about these illegal exporters. But we have decided to cover up for them."

The Spy Who Went Into The Clink

■ THOMAS DOHENY walked out of prison in London this month after serving half a 12-month sentence for stealing a car. He had not stolen a car.

The car's owners, Woodchester Finance of Dublin, have twice assured Mr Doheny's lawyers in writing that the car was not stolen, that they had never complained to anyone that it was stolen, that it was leased to Mr Doheny and that he'd paid for it. "Quite clearly," wrote Woodchester's lawyers in July last year, "our clients could not allege theft as at all material times your client had not unlawfully taken the vehicle nor did our clients in any way imply this."

Since he did not steal a car, why was Mr Doheny convicted and imprisoned? Because he was an intelligence agent for the British army and, for some reason he can't fathom, he got up the nose of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Fermanagh.

Doheny was a perfect recruit for army intelligence: his family and his wife are Irish and he lived in the Irish Republic. In 1992 he was sent to Enniskillen in the north where he masqueraded as a builder and developer. Army intelligence set up his companies, organised his building contracts and paid him handsomely. He reported regularly to Lt Col George Williams, a senior intelligence officer based at Lisburn.

However, one morning in June 1992 armed police officers burst into Doheny's house, terrifying his wife who later had a miscarriage. Her baby, she was later told, died inside her at about the time of the police raid. Doheny was hauled off to the police station where he was surprised to be told: "We know who you work for."

He was questioned for hours by a special branch officer about his army employers. He managed to telephone Col Williams to protest, and was released soon afterwards. Then, he says, he was followed by police cars everywhere he went. In March last year he and his wife had had enough. She went home to the South and he went to London to see his parents. In London, on 3 March last year, he was arrested and charged with the theft of the car his wife was driving in the Irish republic. Protests and phone calls to Col Williams were of no avail. He was deported back to Enniskillen.

After five and a half days in custody Doheny was taken to Enniskillen magistrates' court where a solicitor, a Mr Reginald Ferguson, was provided for him. Ferguson immediately denounced the theft prosecution as absurd. There was no evidence that the car had been stolen, he said. If there was a breach of the terms of the lease, which Doheny denied, that was a matter for the civil courts in the Republic of Ireland, and anyway it was not a crime.

The police kept telling Doheny that if he didn't plead guilty he would be sent to Crumlin Road prison, where republican prisoners would be told he was a spy. Not surprisingly he pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison — but instead of being taken into custody, he was told he had four hours to get out of the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland!

Mr Ferguson, who confirms all this, gave his client a lift into Enniskillen from where he walked the ten miles or so to the border. Back in the south, Mr Doheny continued to ring Col Williams, demanding that his sentence be annulled and his conviction quashed. Williams replied that something would be done. In May Doheny went to London again to see his parents. He was arrested there by the Metropolitan police for the same old illusory car theft, and was threatened with deportation to Northern Ireland — and Crumlin Road prison.

His minders in intelligence managed to get him off the deportation. But he was hauled off to Pentonville to serve the sentence imposed by the magistrate in Enniskillen for something he didn't do. He served six months and is now out again, fighting to overturn his conviction and for compensation for what he regards as his murdered child. He has also submitted a bill for £38,000 unpaid salary.

Lt Col George Williams was killed in the Chinook air crash last May. Doheny now reports to Williams's successor.

Thomas Doheny believes he was the victim of a feud between army intelligence and the RUC: and that sections of the police in Fermanagh went to ludicrous lengths to get him out of Northern Ireland, and to persecute him afterwards. Such feuds are likely to intensify as the peace process accelerates.

Army intelligence agents in the north must be hoping they will be better protected than Thomas Doheny.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

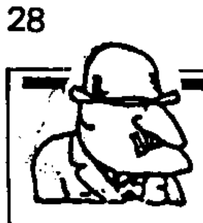
STRONG ARMS OF THE LAW

■ PETER RISK (sic), administrator for the London county courts, is very worried by the popular resistance to the expensive and destructive extension of the M11 in north London.

In a recent circular to county court clerks he warns that "a certain type of bailiff" is needed to evict the squatters who obstruct the road-builders. "The bailiffs," he writes, "need to be fit enough to clamber up ladders; manhandle people out of the building and generally resist the aggression of the squatters. Just as importantly, the bailiffs need to have the 'bottle' for the situation they find themselves in. I apologise for using this word, but I can think of no other which fits the bill."

Someone called Brian Finch, he says, is organising the heavy mob needed for the task. He asks all court clerks to "discuss the problem with your team and to inform Peter Bolton (chief clerk at Bow county court) if you have any individuals who feel they can assist with what is a challenging task."

This appeal goes out on the official notepaper of the lord chancellor's department, which eagerly supports Mr Risk's bold initiative.



In the City

JACK SOFIER, a director of clothing group Helene, has been the subject of a Scotland Yard Fraud Squad investigation regarding multiple share applications.

Sofier joined Helene last year following the takeover of his casual clothes maker Gabicci by Helene in a deal which netted him more than £500,000.

The Fraud Squad investigation was ended three months ago following advice from the Crown Prosecution Service. The CPS advised that owing to recent changes in the law regarding multiple share applications there was insufficient evidence to justify a prosecution.

The police probe followed allegations that Sofier had recruited a number of Gabicci employees to co-operate in a scheme to apply for shares in the privatised generating companies. It was suggested Gabicci employees had agreed to their names being used on applications financed by Sofier in return for a cut of the profits.

However, in the view of the CPS and m'learned friends this tactic is not necessarily illegal if the applicants are genuine, agree to their names being used and benefit from the deals. This it seems may not represent deception or dishonesty even if it is not exactly what was supposed to happen or in keeping with the spirit of the law banning multiple applications.

That law, however, has been revised as a result of a number of failed prosecutions which were either abandoned or thrown out on legal grounds. A similar case involving the 1991 English and Scottish generating company privatisations collapsed earlier this month. The contracts manager at Gartmore Investment Management denied dishonesty or deception in using the names of colleagues whose applications were financed through his bank account. The judge threw out the case after being told those involved in the applications had been paid the profits.

No doubt Helene are relieved that Honest Jack has been found not to have acted illegally or to have any case to answer, meaning his fellow directors can have every confidence in his continued role as a main board director.

ONE OF the more avid political contacts claimed by Mohamed Fayed, that pillar of probity and whited sepulchre of public morality (P. Preston), is said to have been Armed Forces Minister Nicholas Soames.

No doubt the phoney pharaoh's proprietorship of the Harrods Food Hall may have had something to do with any attraction felt by the slimline Soames. Indeed even the pharaoh, whose generosity to politicians knew no bounds, is said to have complained at Fatty's appetite for Harrods hospitality. But then this was undoubtedly yet another fabrication.

IT SEEMS there are intriguing suggestions about an unexplored aspect of the relationship between the great story teller Lord Archer and his Kurdish friend Broosk Saib who was made richer as a result of Archer's too well timed Anglia TV share deals.

These would seem to relate to unjustified speculation as to how Saib has maintained his life style since the collapse of his interior design and estate agency businesses and why neither man has explained the £80,000 favour. Much attention is being directed by inquisitive tabloid hacks into certain social friends Saib and the Prime Minister's erstwhile chum have in common. No doubt, as before, they will only discover that the great story teller is blameless.

GOOD to see the Friday night drop back at work again aiding "revelations" by the Sunday business sections.

Both the *Sunset Times* and the *Sunday Hellograph* managed to discover simultaneously on 13 November that industrial materials group Cookson and Johnson Matthey of precious metals fame were planning a merger which could be announced shortly. An announcement was duly made to the Stock Exchange (which is supposed to hear first) the next day. So much for the Exchange's doomed efforts to stop such controlled "leaks" and for the newspapers' concerned high moral tone in denying they benefit from such financial news management.

TALKING of leaks, it is no doubt entirely coincidental that the world came to know all there was to know about the Department of Timidity & Inaction's insider dealing probe of Lord Archer only after copies of the DTI inspectors' reports were circulated to the Stock Exchange and the Securities & Futures Authority.

It would be churlish and inaccurate to connect the detailed knowledge of the report's findings evidenced by the *Financial Times*, among others, with a fulsome "puff" for the work of the Stock Exchange's Surveillance Group which appeared in October, after the Archer coverage had finished.

OBSERVERS of the outcome of Brent Walker trial, not to mention the banks that loaned the company £1.6 billion will no doubt be puzzled to learn that seemingly the most important man in the leisure group was finance director Wilfred Aquilina, an over-promoted and overpaid penniless accountant who now runs a restaurant.

Although everyone else believed hands-on chief executive George Walker, acquitted of all charges, was running Brent Walker, some £19 million left company bank accounts and went walkabout round the globe without Walker (who admitted insisting on signing for everything over £50,000) knowing anything about it. But then as he told the jury, so often he was not in the office, left much to his trusted executives or was far too busy to read the myriad documents he signed.

Had various other witnesses given evidence — including perhaps Aquilina — a different, more familiar view of Brent Walker might have been presented to the jury. Certainly Judge Geoffrey Rivlin in sentencing the emotional Wilfred to a suspended jail term and a £25,000 fine seemed to take the view he was more the ever-willing pawn than a principal.

After all, even once-again-Gorgeous George, whose Russian comeback plans are lauded by the *Sunset Times*, says Wilfred is innocent.

ONE OF George Walker's most loyal bankers was Arab Banking Corporation. So much so that the Bank of England is understood to have been concerned about the relationship and a similar closeness to another winner, Polly Peck's Asil Nadir.

But perhaps of greater and continuing regulatory concern are the links between ABC and Libya in the light of United Nations sanctions. It seems the BoE has expressed concern about Libyan influence and involvement in both the ownership and management of ABC. The bank chairman Abdullah Saudi has sought to reassure the BoE but it seems doubts may still remain.

THE Inland Revenue is continuing to probe the affairs of those stockbrokers who used to star on the list of usual suspects when it came to investigating well-timed share deals. Special Office investigators are said to have been paying so much attention to David Abell and the late Chris Selmes' pal Michael Fitzroy Somerset-Leeke (formerly of Coni & Covington aka Coni Gilbert Sankey aka CGS Securities aka Whitefriars, all now RIP) that "Springer" is said to be contemplating joining certain of his clients offshore.

Meanwhile Bill Collins, late of Guy Puckle, is said to have been in receipt of demands for up to £2 million from the taxman. Not surprisingly these were strongly resisted and may not be pressed due to Revenue embarrassment over the trial next year of former Special Office Two chief Michael Allcock on unrelated corruption charges regarding Arab non-taxpayers.

'Slicker'

A STORY IS TOLD of Donald, a revered ghillie in years gone by on a certain loch of our acquaintance. It was a bad morning for trout, the water a glassy calm.

Donald toiled all morning at the oars while his cargo of two London businessmen caught nothing.

As lunchtime neared. Donald began to look forward to the lustrous sherry-gold depths of The Macallan Malt Whisky which was the customary reward for a deserving ghillie.But the otiose Sassenachs had other ideas.

"No fish, Donald," they cried. *"Then no whisky!"* Donald said nothing, and ate his lunch at some remove.

But the iron had entered his soul.

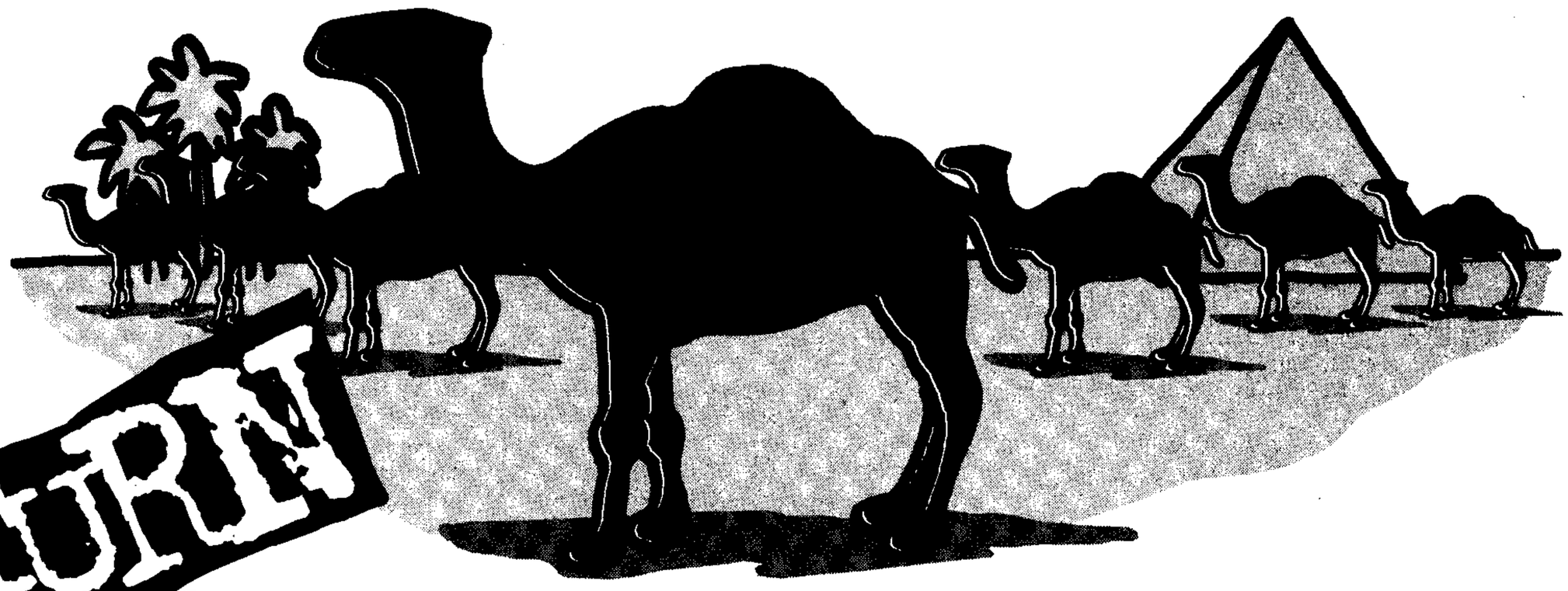
The wind rose. And all afternoon while every other boat on the loch was landing an almost miraculous draught of trout, Donald rowed his clients slowly up and down the one unruffled stretch of water.

When evening came, he deposited his fishless clients on the bank, and surveyed them gravely as they rifled through their treasuries of insult, goggling like the trout they had so signally failed to capture.

"Nae Macallan." said Donald at last. *"Nae fish!"* And rowed off into the gloaming.

The MACALLAN The Malt

NEW CAMEL MILD



RETURN of

7 things YOU didn't know about

SMOOTH-TASTING

Camel Mild

1. 'Camel Mild' is the name of a famous experiment to detect telepathy amongst camels. But you probably knew I was going to say that. In which case, you probably also know Camel Mild is a smooth-tasting cigarette.

2. If you hold a pack of Camel Mild up to the mirror, the camel will appear to point the other way. This exercise will not affect the smooth taste.

3. Despite its acknowledged smoothness, a Camel Mild will not pass through the eye of a needle.

4. In Egypt, packs of camels travel in caravans. In Britain, packs of Camel Mild also travel in cars and trucks.

5. Camel Mildew is a fungal disease affecting dromedaries and is not to be confused with Camel Mild, the smooth-tasting cigarette.

6. Despite centuries of erosion, Carmel, a mountain in Israel, is still nowhere near as smooth as Camel Mild.

7. If you were to drop a real camel and a pack of Camel Mild from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, they would both strike the ground at exactly the same time. Only the Camel Mild, however, would taste smooth.

9mg TAR 0·7mg NICOTINE

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DON'T MAKE THEM BREATHE YOUR SMOKE

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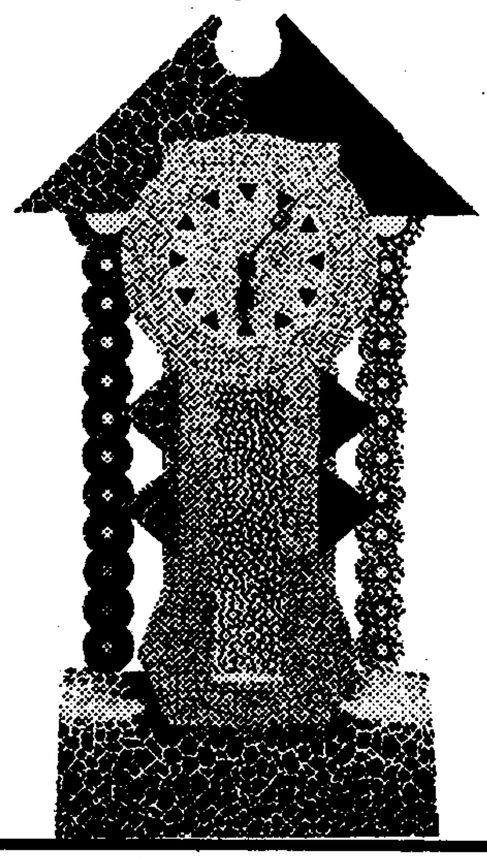

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Jim White, The Independent

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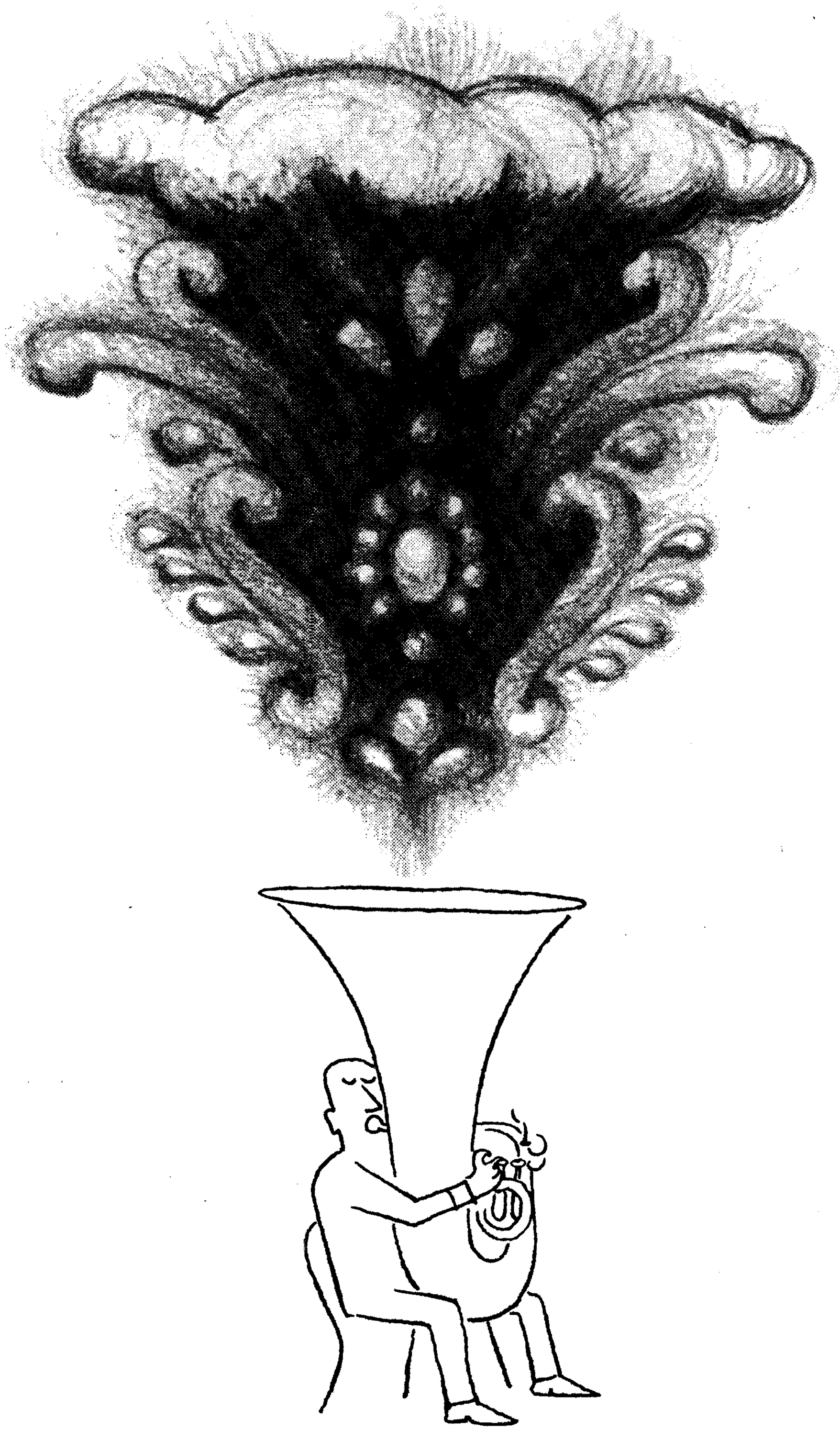

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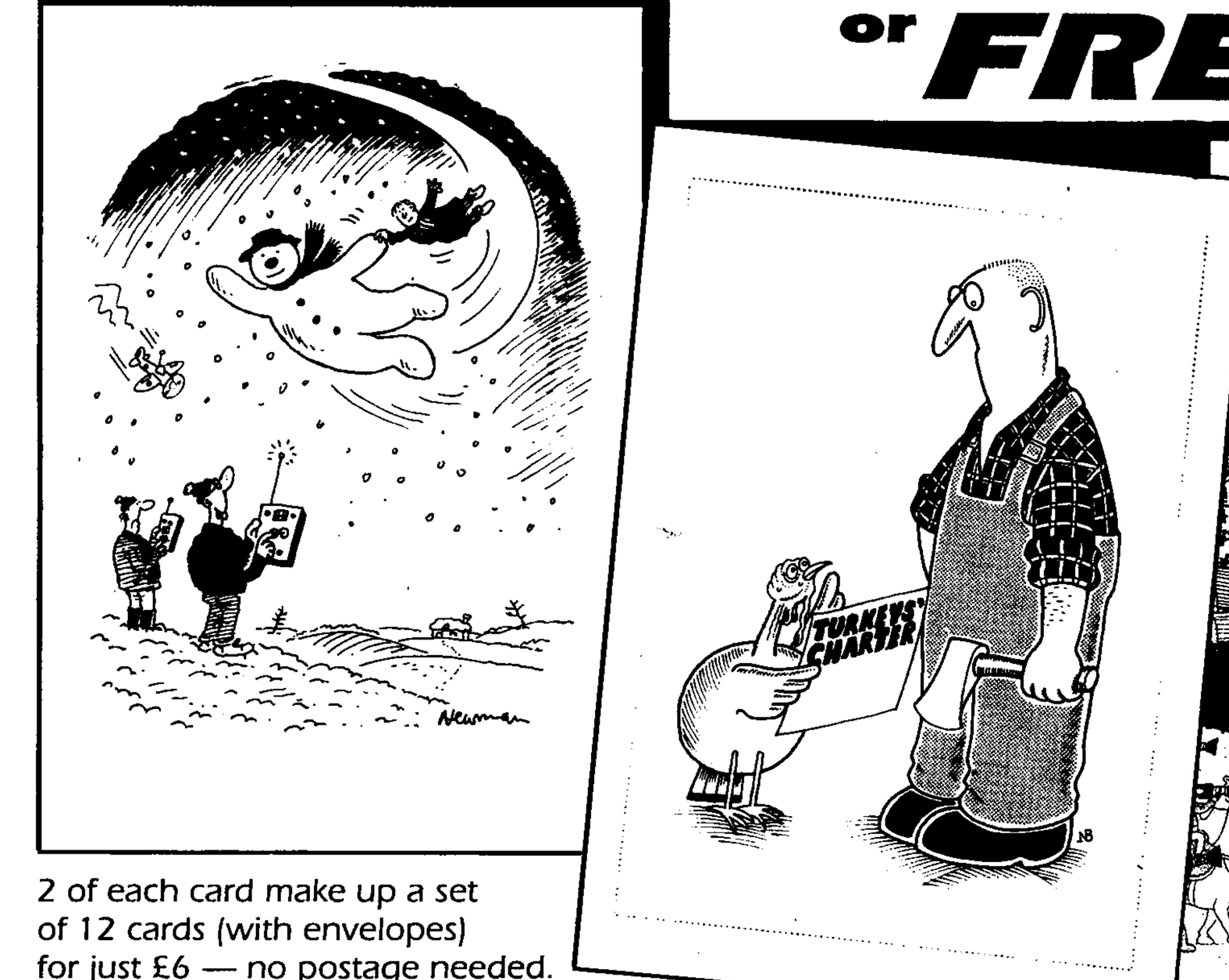

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